

**ALTERNATIVE SERVICE  
IN CANADA  
DURING WORLD WAR II**

**J. A. TOEWS**



**Alternative Service in Canada  
During World War II**





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by

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## FOREWORD

Alternative Service, for many conscientious objectors, was a venture of faith. It was an expression of discipleship in an hour of crisis and national emergency. Since the crisis was one involving national emergency, and affected the people of Canada as a whole, the service rendered by the conscientious objector was, perforce, of such a nature that an entire nation would benefit. It would be possible, therefore, to evaluate this service from the point of view of its national importance and such evaluations have indeed been made by men of office. However, since the dynamics of such service were, for most men, of a spiritual nature, a fuller and truer evaluation must take this factor into account.

The author of this book is in sympathy with the cause of the conscientious objector and his service during World War II. As camp pastor, he was responsible for deepening the convictions in this area of thought and faith for many young men so that, as a direct result, they were able to rethink their position more intelligently. The writer of this foreword, who at that time was also a conscientious objector in Alternative Service, acknowledges that no other person has influenced him more towards a better understanding of the Christian's duty in time of war than the author of this book.

The data of this book are presented with accuracy and proper documentation. The trained reader will detect that its style resembles that of a thesis. It is not the author's primary aim to argue the validity of the theological or philosophical position which prompted such a service. This he has ably done in another book: *True Non-resistance Through Christ*. This work should appeal to both those who are and those who are not in agreement with its position. Certain pertinent facts are studied and analyzed. Some of the conclusions presented are those reached by men in government and certainly cannot be brushed aside as subjective evaluations by someone himself too much involved to be able to present a fair picture.

This volume provides former Alternative Service men with valuable information concerning their own contribution during World War II. It was often difficult for the Alternative Service worker to see his service as an important part of a meaningful operation. From the vantage point of time, a more mature mind, and the additional information provided by this book, he should be able to make a better total evaluation of the service he rendered during those war years.

The writer of this foreword is pleased to commend the book to the public. May it be instrumental in strengthening the cause of Christian discipleship.

Frank C. Peters



## P R E F A C E

Alternative Service appears as a new phenomenon in Canadian History during World War II. As the name indicates, Alternative Service was a form of national service which the Canadian Government required of conscientious objectors in lieu of military training or service. In developing this form of service the Government took into consideration the recommendations of the Historic Peace Churches on this question. The provision of such a service during a time when the policy of "total war" seemed to offer the only hope for national survival, certainly constitutes an interesting and challenging subject for historical study. Alternative Service is more than a mere name given to a form of civilian service during wartime; it is one of the most striking symbols of freedom of conscience and religion in a democracy. That a nation would allow expression in wartime of a viewpoint which contradicted the generally accepted policy for national defence is a significant thing. Although both Great Britain as well as the United States provided non-combatant service under civilian direction during World War II, Alternative Service in Canada developed along distinctive lines, and did not conform closely to the systems in either Great Britain or the United States.

My interest in the subject dates back to the first years of the last war. Throughout the War it was my privilege to have numerous contacts with conscientious objectors engaged in Alternative Service. My close association with many leaders of the Historic Peace Churches provided the opportunity to study the problem from different perspectives.

The writing of this book would have been impossible, however, without special research work in the Dominion Archives, the Parliamentary Library, and in the comprehensive files of the Department of Labour, Ottawa. The Committee of Selection of the John S. Ewart Memorial Fund graciously approved a grant for this purpose which enabled me to go to Ottawa for special research. Most of the relevant material for my thesis was found in the files of the Department of Labour.

It would have been impossible for me to collect the materials and documents necessary for this study if it had not been for the generous assistance and cooperation of Government officials and friends. I would like to express my appreciation and gratitude to the following officials in the Department of Labour: The Honorable Milton Gregg, Minister, and, A. H. Brown, Deputy Minister of Labour, for granting permission to examine the relevant documents and records; to Mr. Raymond Ranger, Special Assistant to the Deputy Minister of Labour, for making the necessary arrangements upon my arrival in Ottawa; to Mr. F. W. Burton, of Economics and Research, and Mr. E. E. Wild, of the Ad-



ministrative Service Branch, for making available all the records of the Alternative Service Branch which have been preserved; and especially to Mrs. L. P. Pepin of the Screening and Storage Division, for her interest and helpfulness in locating important documents. Dr. W. K. Lamb, of the Public Archives, and Mr. F. B. Fox, of the Parliamentary Library, both in Ottawa, have also been most cooperative and helpful in supplying much needed information.

Dr. J. H. S. Reid, and Professor H. S. Crowe, of the Department of History, United College, deserve special mention for their encouragement to undertake this study and research.

I am grateful to Mr. C. J. Rempel, Secretary of the Historic Peace Churches, for making available all the minutes and records which have been preserved at the Mennonite Central Committee office in Waterloo, Ontario. Mr. Herbert Klassen, Abbotsford, B.C., deserves recognition for sending me important documents from the private papers of his father, the late C. F. Klassen, who was intimately connected with Alternative Service from its very inception to the end of the War.

Last but not least, I would like to express my sincere appreciation to the Publication Committee of our Canadian Mennonite Brethren Conference for assuming the responsibility for the publication of this book. May this history of "Alternative Service in Canada During World War II" be a reminder and a challenge, especially to our young people, that the "faith of our fathers" is living still, and that it found expression in service and sacrifice during the last War.

J. A. Toews

Winnipeg, Canada  
February, 1959

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

	PAGE
FOREWORD .....	5
PREFACE .....	7
CHAPTER	
I. HISTORICAL BACKGROUND FOR ALTERNATIVE SERVICE .....	13
The Immigration of the Mennonites .....	14
The Immigration of the Society of Friends (Quakers) .....	20
The Immigration of the Hutterites .....	23
The Immigration of the Doukhobors .....	24
II. ORGANIZATION AND PREPARATION OF HISTORIC PEACE CHURCHES FOR ALTERNATIVE SERVICE ....	28
Organization of the Eastern Churches .....	30
Organization of the Western Churches .....	32
Mennonites offer Alternative Service to the Government.....	35
III. GOVERNMENT REGULATIONS RE: POSTPONE- MENT OF MILITARY TRAINING AND ALTER- NATIVE SERVICE .....	41
Government Regulations for Conscientious Objectors During World War I .....	41
Government Regulations for Conscientious Objectors During World War II .....	43
IV. GOVERNMENT POLICY WITH RESPECT TO ALTERNATIVE SERVICE .....	52
Policy Under National Selective Service Regulations .....	53
Policy Under National Selective Service Civilian Regulations .....	55
Policy with Respect to Pay and General Welfare .....	62
Organization and Administration of the A.S.W. Camp System .....	65
Policy with Respect to Non-combatant Service in the Royal Canadian Army Medical Corps .....	68
Policy in the "Demobilization" of Alternative Service Men	70

CHAPTER	PAGE
V. GOVERNMENT PROJECTS FOR ALTERNATIVE SERVICE .....	75
Alternative Service in Camps .....	75
Alternative Service in National Parks and Forest Experiment Stations .....	77
Alternative Service in B.C. Forest Service Camps .....	83
Alternative Service Outside Camps .....	89
Alternative Service in Agriculture .....	89
Alternative Service in Industry .....	91
Alternative Service in the Royal Canadian Army Medical Corps .....	95
VI. RELIGIOUS GROUPS AND ACTIVITIES IN ALTERNATIVE SERVICE .....	97
Government Regulations .....	97
Denominational Groups .....	98
Religious Services .....	99
Recreational Activities .....	101
Publication .....	101
Evaluation by Alternative Service Men .....	103
VII. CONTRIBUTIONS AND ACHIEVEMENTS OF ALTERNATIVE SERVICE .....	105
Protection and Improvements of Canadian Forests .....	105
Contributions to the Canadian Red Cross Society .....	107
Evaluation of Alternative Service Work by Government Leaders .....	109
BIBLIOGRAPHY .....	113
APPENRIX A. Order-in-Council P.C. 957 .....	116
APPENDIX B. National War Service Regulations 1940 (Recruits) (part) .....	118
APPENDIX C. Application Form for Postponement .....	120
APPENDIX D. Letter: Crerar to Gray .....	121
APPENDIX E. Order-in-Council, P.C. 2821 (part) .....	122

**LIST OF TABLES**

TABLE	PAGE
I. Postponements Under the National Resources Mobilization Act, 1940 .....	47
II. Postponements According to Provinces .....	48
III. Distribution of Conscientious Objectors According to Provinces .....	49
IV. Distribution of Conscientious Objectors According to Racial Origin .....	49
V. Number and Disposition of Postponed Conscientious Objectors as of December 31, 1945 .....	61
VI. Summary of Major Project Work. (National Parks). .....	77
VII. Total Number of Men Received in Camps from June, 1941 to March 31, 1943 .....	81
VIII. Total Number of Men in Camps as at March 31, 1943 .....	82
IX. Total Number of Men in Camps as at January 31, 1946 .....	82
X. Number and Disposition of Alternative Service Men in National Parks and Forest Experiment Stations .....	82
XI. Summary of Major Project Work (B.C. Forest Service) .....	88
XII. Scale of Payments to the Red Cross Society .....	93
XIII. Number and Disposition of Conscientious Objectors in Relation to Red Cross Payments .....	94
XIV. Distribution of Conscientious Objectors According to Religious Affiliation .....	99
XV. Payments by Conscientious Objectors to the Canadian Red Cross .....	108
XVI. Provincial Source of Red Cross Payments .....	109
CHART. Lines of Authority and Interdepartmental Cooperation in Handling Service Workers .....	67

**LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS**

A.S.W.	—	Alternative Service Work.
B.C.F.S.	—	British Columbia Forestry Service.
C.P.S.	—	Civilian Public Service.
C.O.	—	Conscientious Objector.
N.R.M.A.	—	National Resources Mobilization Act.
R.C.A.M.C.	—	Royal Canadian Army Medical Corps.
S.S.D.	—	Screening and Storage Division (Department of Labour).





## Chapter I

### HISTORICAL BACKGROUND FOR ALTERNATIVE SERVICE

Although Alternative Service appears as a new phenomenon in Canadian History during World War II, its roots go back at least 150 years. The admission into the country of religious pacifist groups, to whom exemption from military service was granted either by statute or by special orders-in-council, created an opportunity and during wartime perhaps even a necessity for the development of the concept of Alternative Service. Economic rather than military considerations governed the immigration policy of the Canadian Government during the first decades after Confederation. Although several smaller pacifist groups had already settled in Upper Canada soon after the American Revolution, the larger bodies immigrated into the country with the opening up of the "Great West" towards the end of the 19th Century. Clifford Sifton, who entered the cabinet of Sir Wilfrid Laurier late in 1896 as Minister of the Interior, became the champion of a more aggressive immigration policy. "The first thing to do", he thought, "was to settle the empty West with producing farmers, this was also the second, third, fourth and fifth thing to do. Solve the problem of how to get people of the right kind into the West, and keep them there, and the problem of national development was also solved; if the West remains empty every expedient to restore prosperity would be futile."<sup>1</sup> Although this statement was made after most of the Mennonites had settled on the 'East Reserve' and "West Reserve"<sup>2</sup> of Southern Manitoba in the 1870's, it very aptly expresses the prevailing view of Canadian Government leaders at the time of their immigration. Hence we find that the Mennonites, and this would apply to other religious pacifist groups as well, were admitted into Canada because of their desirability as farmers for a pioneer country. For the Mennonites it was a repetition of their earlier history in Poland, Prussia and later in Russia, where they had been welcomed because of their reputation as hard-working tillers of the soil.

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<sup>1</sup> J. W. Daffoe, Clifford Sifton, Toronto: The Macmillan Co., 1931. p.131.

<sup>2</sup> The names are used to indicate the two original Mennonite settlements in Manitoba. The East Reserve was identical with the land grant of seven townships offered to the delegates of 1873, and coextensive with the present Municipality of Hanover. The boundaries of the West Reserve corresponded roughly with those of the present Municipality of Rhineland and portions of adjoining municipalities, particularly Stanley.

In this chapter a brief account will be given of the immigration of four historic pacifist groups, whose opposition to military service in their native lands was a primary reason for their coming to Canada. In every case the Canadian Government respected the conscientious objections to war of these immigrants, and made provision for their exemption from military service by statute or order-in-council. These four groups are: The Mennonites, the Quakers, the Hutterites and the Doukhobors.

## **I. THE IMMIGRATION OF THE MENNONITES**

The origin of the Mennonite-Anabaptist Movement as a radical wing of the great Protestant Reformation of the 16th century is too well known to require a detailed treatment here. Throughout the four centuries of their history the Mennonites have been opposed to militarism and war which they considered to be inconsistent with the Gospel of God's redemptive love, as well as inconsistent with the nature of the Christian life, whose essence they found in discipleship. This conviction often resulted in conflict with the "powers that be" and consequently led to persecution and emigration.

### **1. Immigration from the United States, 1786-1840.**

The earliest Mennonite settlement in Canada was founded in 1786 near the mouth of Twenty Mile Creek where it empties into the south shore of Lake Ontario, about twenty miles west of Niagara Falls by five Mennonite families from Bucks county, Pennsylvania.<sup>3</sup> These Mennonites had a Swiss-German background, and were the direct descendants of immigrants who had left the Palatinate with many other Germans around 1700 to settle in Pennsylvania, the colony to which they had been invited by the Quakers, with whom they shared such basic convictions as freedom of conscience and the separation of church and state.

The Revolutionary War of 1776 brought to the Mennonites of Pennsylvania severe testings of their faith and of their political loyalties. Because they did not actively participate in this war on either side, and because they refused to join the army and were reluctant to take the oath of allegiance to the new state governments after 1776, they were suspected of loyalist preferences, and frequently identified with the Tories. Although the Pennsylvania Assembly exempted the Mennonites from military drill, they had to pay a so-called fine for this privilege. In a few instances they were also imprisoned, their property was confiscated, and their lives were threatened by super-patriotic mobs. The claim, however, of some Canadian Mennonites that the migration to Canada was merely a continuation of the traditional Mennonite quest for religious toleration, is undoubtedly an oversimplification of the prob-

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<sup>3</sup> cf. Henry C. Smith, *The Story of the Mennonites*. Berne, Indiana: Mennonite Book Concern, Ch. X.

lem. Since the Mennonite Movement to Canada continued long after a stable constitutional government had been established in the United States, and also long after the State of Pennsylvania had guaranteed both the Mennonites and Quakers full religious toleration, including exemption from military service, there must have been other motives back of the Canadian trek. The Mennonites left the rather crowded mother colonies of Pennsylvania to find a new home in Ontario "because land was cheap and fertile; and because before the days of railroads and hard roads it was easier to follow the river valleys to the north and west into Canada than to cross the mountains over rough wagon trails into Western Pennsylvania and Ohio."<sup>4</sup>

Just prior to the War of 1812 there were three fairly large Mennonite settlements in Ontario: at Vineland in Lincoln County, in Waterloo County, and at Markham (just north of Toronto).

It is interesting to note, that already at this early date the historic nonresistant position of certain peace groups was recognized by the Canadian (i.e. British) government, and that provision was made by statute for their conscientious objection to war. It is quite common in Mennonite circles, and sometimes even among government officials, to regard the Order-in-Council of 1873 as the first government declaration and guarantee in which exemption from military service was granted to Mennonites. The first statute in which mention is made of the Mennonites and Tunkers,<sup>5</sup> appears in 1808, during the reign of George III. In the statute of 1808 — 48 George III, Chapter 1, Section 27, we have the following provision:

Be it further enacted by the authorities aforesaid, that the persons, called Quakers, Mennonists and Tunkers, who from certain scruples of conscience decline bearing arms, shall not be compelled to serve in the said militia, but every person professing that he is one of the people called Quakers, Mennonists or Tunkers, and producing a certificate of his being a Quaker, Mennonist, or Tunker, signed by the clerk of the meeting of such society or by any three or more of the people called Quakers, Mennonists or Tunkers, shall be excused and exempted from serving in the said militia . . .<sup>6</sup>

However, exemption from service in the militia did not mean total exemption from all obligations. The same Act provides for annual payments of twenty shillings in time of peace and five pounds in time of war by all men between 16 and 60 years of age. In the following year an Act "for the relief of Mennonists and Tunkers" was passed which permitted these groups to substitute a simple affirmation for the oath

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 565.

<sup>5</sup> The "Tunkers", whose official name is "Brethren in Christ" received this nickname because they baptized by immersion. Although they early separated from the Mennonite Church, they have maintained a strong position against war and military service through the years.

<sup>6</sup> Quoted in "Laws Affecting Historic Peace Churches" compiled by J. B. Martin and N. M. Bearinger, 1941. p.1. Published by Conference of Historic Peace Churches.

which was required by law. The statutes concerning exemption from military service were restated and revised during the next few decades, but no radical changes were undertaken. In the Act of 1855 — 18 Victoria, Chapter 77, Section 7, which deals with conscientious objectors and their refusal to bear arms, there is no reference to financial payments. Apparently the clause referring to those payments had been dropped since there was no conscription for military service in Canada at the time.

The year after Confederation the Militia Act was revised as follows:

Any person bearing a certificate from the Society of Quaker, Mennonists or Tunkers or any inhabitant of Canada of any religious denomination, otherwise subject to military duty, but who, from the doctrines of his religion is adverse to bearing arms and refuses personal military service, shall be exempt from such service when balloted in time of peace, or war, upon such conditions and under such regulations, as the Governor-in-Council may from time to time prescribe.<sup>7</sup>

Two points in the statute of 1868 need brief comment. First, provision is made for exemption from military service not only for members of the historic peace churches, but also for "any inhabitant of Canada of any religious denomination." Secondly, the provision is subject to "such conditions . . . as the Governor-in-Council may from time to time prescribe." It was this last clause which caused serious apprehension among the Mennonites in South-Russia several years later, when they considered Canada as the "promised land" to which they wanted to migrate.

Among the Mennonites of Canada the Mennonites of Ontario were probably best informed on Government legislation affecting conscientious objectors when World War II broke out. By background and organization they were well prepared to take a united stand on the principle of nonresistance and to make a positive contribution in the formulation of a satisfactory policy of Alternative Service as will be shown later.

## **2. Immigration from Czarist Russia, 1874 - 1880<sup>8</sup>**

The Mennonites who settled in Russia in 1789 and later had left their homes in the Vistula Delta in order to escape Prussian militarism and growing economic restrictions. Special inducements and privileges were granted by Catharine II to these industrious settlers, chief among these being a complete exemption from military service. It lies beyond the scope of this treatise to deal with the remarkable progress and growing prosperity of the early settlements and the establishment of a number of Daughter-Colonies by the Mother-Colonies: Chortitza and Molotschna. Suffice it to say, that for a few decades the Mennonites were left

<sup>7</sup> 1868 — 31 Vic., Chapter 10, Section 17, as quoted in *Laws Affecting Historic Peace Churches*, p.5.

<sup>8</sup> See C. H. Smith, *The Coming of the Russian Mennonites*, Berne, Indiana: Mennonite Book Concern, 1927.

almost completely unmolested in their endeavors to build a "Holy Commonwealth" of their own, so that their colonies constituted something like a state within the state.

However, the growing nationalism of middle Europe, especially in the second half of the nineteenth century, also affected Russia and inspired the "Slavophiles" to action. They were convinced that the day for "Russianizing all Russia" had come. The privileged position of the Mennonites in the Russian Empire presented an anomalous situation which could not last forever. The blow fell in 1870. An imperial decree proclaimed that the day of special privileges had ended for the German Colonists. The decree made Russian the official language in the local "Gebietsamt" (Municipal Office); the study of the Russian language was made compulsory in all the schools, etc. In his critical analysis of the motives that prompted the Mennonites to leave the steppes of Russia and come to the prairies of Manitoba, Dr. E. K. Francis points out that factors like those mentioned above are quite subordinate and are insufficient to explain the "Great Trek". In Dr. Francis' own words: "It is very doubtful whether such consideration alone could ever have provided sufficient motivation for the emigration movement. This required an event which could be interpreted as a direct and obvious threat to Mennonite religious principles, so that the general dissatisfaction could be rationalized and the drastic action justified. Such an event was the abrogation of the privilege of military exemption for all former foreign colonists."<sup>9</sup>

Almost immediately after the proclamation of the fateful decree, the Mennonite leaders called public meetings at which the question of military service was discussed. Petitions were drafted and several delegations were dispatched to St. Petersburg. These efforts were not successful and the Mennonite deputies were unable to influence Government policy. When the new military law was finally promulgated in 1874, however, its section 157 provided that Mennonites were not to bear arms but to serve as stretcher bearers and medical corps men or in work in shops. Later in the same year they were offered a form of civilian alternative service in forestry camps. This provision of an Alternative Service as early as 1874 is mentioned in order to show that those Mennonites who left Russia between 1874-1880 did not only object to military service but to Alternative Service as well.

The agitation for emigration began almost as soon as the plans of the Government became known. Cornelius Jansen, a prosperous grain merchant in the City of Berdiansk, contacted the British consul in that city and inquired as to the possibility of military exemption in Canada, and also as to the availability of large tracts of land suitable for group settlements. This inquiry led to a series of interesting letters written back and forth among various British and Canadian government officials. The prospect of securing some fifty thousand industrious farmers for the unsettled prairies of Western Canada aroused keen interest

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<sup>9</sup> E. K. Francis, *In Search of Utopia*. Altona, Manitoba: D. W. Friesen and Sons Ltd., 1955, p.34.



among the Canadian authorities, and before long, the Ottawa government dispatched a special commissioner, William Hespeler, to South Russia for the purpose of interesting the Mennonites in Canada.

That exemption from military service was a chief concern of the Mennonites in considering Canada as their future homeland, is seen in a letter addressed to Earl Dufferin, Governor General of Canada, by C. Janzen on June 9th, 1872. The letter is self-explanatory.<sup>10</sup>

The answer given to us by Mr. Zohrab, the British Consul here, has been thankfully received. But the sad experience of the present time respecting our refusal to take part in military service, induces us to request respectfully that your Excellency will be kindly pleased to inform us by return mail if possible, how the expression is to be understood saying:

'The Mennonites, like the Quakers, are not liable to forced military service excepting upon such condition and under such regulations as the Governor General may feel compelled to impose.'

From this there arises a general apprehension here that upon alleged necessity, we also might with full legality be drawn into military service, wherein there would only be a repetition of what is also considered a pressing necessity here in Russia or Germany.

By direction of the community here, I beg most respectfully that your Excellency will not look upon this request as distrustful, but that you will be pleased to have a clear answer sent to us upon the subject.

William Hespeler, special commissioner of immigration for the Ottawa government in South Russia, was also convinced that only a "clear answer" by the Canadian government on the question of exemption from military service would crown his efforts to woo and win the Mennonites with success. In a letter dated April 26, 1873, which Mr. Hespeler addressed to J. H. Pope, Minister of Agriculture, he states that

the answers, as also the inducements offered by your Government, they expect to receive in shape of a written document, direct from the Government, confirming the statements I verbally made to them last summer . . . I therefore beg to propose that you should furnish me with credentials drawn out by you in a manner (signed and sealed) as they are in the habit of seeing such — stating the precise conditions the Canadian Government had determined upon — and it should be about as follows, stating first. 1. The exemption from military service . . .<sup>11</sup>

It is significant to note, that of the eight conditions listed in this letter, Mr. Hespeler puts exemption from military service at the head of the list. Canadian authorities gave careful consideration to these petitions from Jansen and Hespeler. In a special Order-in-Council P.C.

<sup>10</sup> **Source:** Public Archives of Canada, Papers of the Governor General, Correspondence with the Secretary of State for the Colonies, 1872.

<sup>11</sup> **Source:** Public Archives of Canada, Department of Agriculture Papers, General Correspondence 8138.

957, submitted by the Minister of Agriculture on July 28th, and approved by His Excellency the Governor General on August 13th, 1873, the first provision states, "That an entire exemption from any Military service, as is provided by law and Order-in-Council, will be granted to the denomination of Christians called Mennonites."<sup>12</sup>

This was indeed a "clear answer" which removed the fear and apprehension in the minds of thousands of prospective immigrants. In 1874 the great migration movement started, in which entire congregations left their well-kept farms and villages for an unknown frontier on the prairies of the United States and Canada. Of the 18,000 Mennonites who left Russia between 1874 and 1880, about 8000 came to the newly established province of Manitoba. A closer study of the various groups and churches which composed the movement reveals that it was the more conservative element among the Mennonites that preferred the Red River Valley to the plains of Kansas and Nebraska. When after 50 years the Mennonites who had remained in Russia were permitted to leave the "Red Paradise" and rejoin their fellow-Mennonites on the Canadian Prairies, the "Russländer" and the "Kanaedier,"<sup>13</sup> did not any more speak the same cultural and religious language. But of this we shall speak later.

### 3. Immigration from Soviet Russia, 1923 - 1930

World War I, revolution, civil war, famine, and a hostile new regime prepared the way for the emigration of a large contingent of Mennonites from Soviet Russia to Canada. Certain Mennonite leaders occasionally speak of the "historical error" of 1874, pointing out that those Mennonites who remained in Russia at that time compromised their historic principles and committed a historical error. The last tragic chapter of the Mennonite colonies in Soviet Russia would tend to such an interpretation of history. Other Mennonite historians, however, see the hand of Divine Providence in the preservation of the Mennonite Brotherhood in spite of Red terror, epidemic diseases and an unprecedented famine. This dire aftermath of the war evoked the traditional spirit of Christian charity among the Mennonites of Canada and the United States. The Mennonite Central Committee (M.C.C.) was organized in 1920, and almost immediately contacts with the brethren in Russia were established. Only the prompt and generous aid given by this relief agency saved the lives of thousands from death by starvation.

Most of the leaders of the Mennonite churches in Russia were convinced that the days for the Mennonite Brotherhood with its privileges and religious freedom would be numbered under the Bolshevik regime. They felt that in order to preserve their spiritual heritage they would have to emigrate. But where were they to go? Among the several

<sup>12</sup> See Appendix which contains complete Order-in-Council.

<sup>13</sup> cf. E. K. Francis, *op.cit.* pp. 212, 213. The name "Russländer" was the popular designation for those who came in the 1920's, whereas the name "Kanädier" was applied by the newcomers to those who had come to Canada in the 1870's.

countries that suggested themselves, the Mennonites found the situation in Canada particularly promising for a large-scale migration. However, a major obstacle had to be eliminated first. Because the Mennonites had claimed and were granted military exemption during the War of 1914-18, the Canadian government, prompted by public opinion, had prohibited the further immigration of Mennonites and Hutterites. Thus before the project could be realized, the ban against the entry of Mennonites had to be lifted. After the victory of the Liberal party in December, 1921, the new Prime Minister, Mackenzie King, who himself had lived among the Ontario Mennonites in his younger days, was favorably disposed to this immigration project. By Order-in-Council of June 2, 1923, which, however, according to E. K. Francis "was never published in the *Canada Gazette* so as to escape the pressure of public opinion,"<sup>14</sup> the door was opened to these immigrants who were so anxious to leave Soviet Russia. Certain conditions were connected with this permission to immigrate "i) that the Mennonites admitted to Canada would find shelter and support among their brethren, ii) that they would be placed on land as farmers, and iii) that none of the immigrants would become a public charge. It was further understood that the privilege of complete military exemption granted to the earlier group in 1873 would not apply to them."<sup>15</sup>

This last stipulation partly explains the readiness of the "Russlaender" Mennonites to accept some form of alternative service in lieu of military service when the Second World War broke out. In this apparent difference of status with regard to military service are to be found the seeds of the controversy that divided the Mennonites of Western Canada early in the last War.

In 1923, however, the Mennonites who were able to escape from political and religious oppression were truly grateful for the land of liberty that opened its doors to receive them. In all, some 21,000 Mennonites came to Canada between 1923-30 during the "second migration" from Russia.

Although the Mennonites were by far the largest pacifist group, and perhaps also the best organized group, to serve in Alternative Service Work Camps during World War II, there were three other groups, as already mentioned, which were also associated with the Mennonites in their opposition to military service. To describe briefly the conditions of their admission into Canada is our aim in the next few pages.

## II. THE IMMIGRATION OF THE SOCIETY OF FRIENDS (Quakers)

Prevailing tradition has associated the first Quaker settlements in Canada with the United Empire Loyalists who came to Canada after the American Revolutionary War. According to Dr. A. G. Dorland,<sup>16</sup>

<sup>14</sup> Francis, *op. cit.* p. 203.

<sup>15</sup> Quoted in Francis, *loc. cit.* (Report of Bishop D. Toews).

<sup>16</sup> A. G. Dorland, *A History of the Society of Friends (Quakers) in Canada*. Toronto: The MacMillan Company of Canada Limited, at St. Martin's House, 1927.

probably the best authority on the Canadian history of the Society of Friends, there are historical records which show that their origin extends for more than a decade in the pre-revolutionary period. As far as is known, the first Quakers in Canada came from the Island of Nantucket to Barrington, Nova Scotia, fourteen years before the United States declared their independence of Great Britain. This early migration to Nova Scotia is, however, not of great significance to the history of the Society in Canada and has no direct connection with the main immigration of Quakers from the United States to Upper Canada which began toward the close of the War of Independence and continued on a large scale down to about 1820.

Since most Quakers migrated to Canada shortly after the Revolutionary War, the motives for their migration have often been misinterpreted. The loyalty to the British Crown was not the primary or paramount motive of their coming to Canada. Ever since the time of its founder, George Fox, the Society of Friends had consistently adhered to its testimony against war as being contrary to the "spirit of Christ". Although the Friends were obedient to the laws of the State and were loyal citizens, the authority of conscience claimed their highest loyalty. The Quakers of the American colonies during the Revolutionary War believed therefore, like the Mennonites, that it was right for them to maintain an attitude of strict neutrality. It is quite probable, that among the Friends who came to Canada during the first Loyalist migration there were those who had Loyalist tendencies, but according to Professor Dorland "they were never partisans, inasmuch as any member who became an active partisan in the struggle on either side was promptly disowned."<sup>17</sup>

Although the Quaker migration to Canada coincided with that of the United Empire Loyalists, it was not a Loyalist movement, but it merged into it. It is true that many Quakers had suffered the confiscation and loss of their property, like their Loyalist compatriots, but this was because they refused to fight for the American cause, and not because they fought for the British. Professor Dorland confirms this interpretation by pointing out, that the Society "refused to allow its members to receive lands from the British Government on the ground that they were Loyalists, since these lands were supposed to be granted as a reward for military service during the late Rebellion, a service which no consistent Quaker could perform."<sup>18</sup>

The Government in Canada was aware of the opposition of these immigrants to military service, and hence when the Militia Act of 1793 was passed during the second session of the first Parliament of Upper Canada, the Quakers are mentioned alongside of the "Mennonists" and Tunkers as religious objectors which were not required to perform military service in the Militia.

As early as September 30, 1806 the Yonge Street Monthly Meeting, which had only recently been organized, presented an address to

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid*, p. 308.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid*, p. 309.

Lieutenant-Governor Francis Gore on the occasion of his arrival in Upper Canada. In this document the Friends, while careful to assert their loyalty to the Government, made it clear that they could not "for conscience sake join with many of our fellow mortals in complementary customs of man, neither in taking up the sword to shed human blood."<sup>19</sup>

During the War of 1812 many Friends, especially in the York (Toronto) area, suffered severe disabilities. Since the Friends also refused to pay the fines which the Government had imposed on them for their exemption from military service, some had their property confiscated and eight of their members from the Yonge Street Monthly Meeting alone were imprisoned for one month.<sup>20</sup>

In their pacifism the Quakers have been very courageous and vocal, also on a Government level. When the Friends held their first Canada yearly Meeting at Pickering in 1867, they addressed to the newly formed Government of the Dominion of Canada a document presenting the historic position of the Friends regarding war, oaths, and liberty of conscience.

The Friends have shown a special interest in the field of International Peace and Arbitration. Throughout the 19th Century the Quakers have been very active in this field, and may justly be described as pioneers and leaders in these endeavours. By way of contrast it might be pointed out, that most Mennonites regarded this "political activity" as a violation of the true spirit of nonresistance.

The Quakers have given very positive expression to their peace principles in all kinds of benevolent work. Throughout their history they have been actively engaged in philanthropy and social reform. The connection of the Society of Friends both in England and America with the abolition of slavery is too well known to require a discussion here. During war time they have made special efforts to alleviate human suffering. In 1914 a "War Victim Relief Committee" was organized as well as an "Ambulance Unit". At the end of the war the Unit had six hundred men (mostly from England and the United States, with a small Canadian representation) who were doing excellent "Alternative Service" among the wounded and dying. According to Dorland, its "two hospital ships conducted by the Unit carried 33,000 men back to Britain; its motor convoys carried over 260,000 sick and wounded; and its four ambulance trains conveyed over half a million patients."<sup>21</sup>

This achievement is all the more remarkable when it is remembered that all this work was done voluntarily without pay, while some of the men even paid their own expenses. As a group, the Canadian Quakers were probably best prepared for Alternative Service in World War II.

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<sup>19</sup> Quoted by Dorland, *Ibid*, p. 94.

<sup>20</sup> cf. *Ibid*, p. 312.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid*, p. 325.

### III. THE IMMIGRATION OF THE HUTTERITES

The Hutterian Brotherhood derives its name from Jacob Hutter who suffered martyrdom by being burned alive at the stake on February 26, 1536, at Innsbruck in the Tyrol. Although not the founder of the movement which bears his name, Jacob Hutter became its outstanding leader and organizer at a critical period in its early history. This history of the Hutterites is a story of "martyrdom and loyalty."<sup>22</sup> Although both the Hutterites and the Mennonites are the spiritual descendants of the Anabaptists of the 16th Century, and although their history shows many parallel experiences, these two groups have no organic connection with each other and hence should not be identified. Driven from their original home in Moravia by persecution, they migrated eastward into Hungary and Transylvania, finally reached the steppes of the Ukraine in the year 1770. This was a few years before the Mennonites from Prussia arrived in the Southern Ukraine. Under Catharine II they were granted religious toleration and military exemption. As pointed out earlier in connection with the emigration of the Mennonites, from Russia, the German colonists lost their military exemption and other special economic and political privileges after 1870. In searching for a land where they would be granted full religious liberties, the Hutterites decided to follow the Mennonites to America. The first contingent arrived in 1874, and by 1879 all Hutterites had left Czarist Russia and settled in the United States. The Hutterites had chosen the James River Valley in the Dakotas as the most desirable location to establish their communal households.

The more liberal inducements, however, that the Canadian Government offered to prospective settlers, as well as the more definite guarantees given for exemption from military service, attracted several Hutterian "Bruderhofs" across the border into the Canadian prairies. By Order-in-Council P.C. 1676, dated August 12th, 1889, the Government of Canada unconditionally exempted from military service the Brethren of the "Hutterische Society", not only those who had already settled in Canada, but also those who might immigrate in future years. The Order provided that such exemption was to be procurable upon the production in each case of a certificate of membership from the proper authorities of their communities.

During the First World War the Hutterites in the United States were subjected to peculiarly vicious attacks by overzealous local patriots and officials because of their firm maintenance of their historic nonresistant position. According to the Mennonite historian, John Horsch "The only conscientious objectors to die as a result of persecution in the camps during the war were two young men from a Hutterian Bruderhof, Joseph and Michael Hofer."<sup>23</sup> Largely as a result of their war ex-

<sup>22</sup> For a comprehensive study of their faith, sufferings and migrations, see Horsch, John, **The Hutterian Brethren**, Goshen, Indiana: Published by the Mennonite Historical Society, 1931.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 115.

periences from 1914 - 1918, all but three of the Bruderhofs migrated to Manitoba and Alberta. Their traditional communal living made it difficult for Alternative Service Officers during the Second World War to determine their essentiality in agricultural employment. When directed to Alternative Service Work Camps, they generally performed satisfactory work, although they were often not even receiving the meager wages for their labors (\$15.00 per month) because the Elders were there to collect this money in order to put it into the communal treasury. The growing economic prosperity of the Hutterite colonies during the war caused perhaps more public criticism than their exemption from military service. As a group they have proven to be loyal and law-abiding citizens, and their young men, in Alternative Service Camps, had the reputation of being hard workers.

#### IV. THE IMMIGRATION OF THE DOUKHOBORS <sup>24</sup>

Among the religio-ethnic groups of Western Canada none have a more picturesque and peculiar history than the Doukhobors. Perhaps no other group has shown such stubborn resistance to cultural and political assimilation into the Canadian "way of life". Although often linked with the Mennonites, they have nothing in common with the latter with the exception of pacifism.

The Doukhobors are members of a religious sect which originated in Russia during the eighteenth century. The name Doukhobor means "spirit-wrestler" and was applied to those whom the Greek Orthodox Church in Russia considered to be wrestling against the Holy Spirit. The members of the sect to whom the name was applied accepted it, but gave to it a new interpretation: it was a true description of those who did not fight with material weapons, but armed with the Spirit of Truth.

Because of their nonconformity in belief and practice, the Doukhobors incurred the wrath of the Russian Orthodox Church. Influenced by the teachings of Count Leo Tolstoy, the Doukhobors in the early 1890's refused to bear arms. This revival of earlier practices came at a time when the Russian government had introduced conscription in the Caucasus — the region in which one of the largest Doukhobor settlements was located. Their defiance of government orders brought swift and cruel punishment. Many Doukhobors were flogged and given heavy sentences in military prisons. News of these events was brought to the attention of the general public, especially in England, by Count Leo Tolstoy and other sympathizers. This publicity, together with petitions presented to the Czar by influential friends, eventually gained them permission to leave Russia "providing: (1) they moved at their own expense, (2) that those in exile (including Peter Verigin) and those already called on military service should work out their sentences, and

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<sup>24</sup> A good book on the earlier history of the Doukhobors is the one by Aylmer Maude, **A Peculiar People: The Doukhobors**. (New York: 1904).



(3) that if any of them ever returned they would be banished to Siberia." <sup>25</sup>

But emigration seemed virtually impossible for an illiterate peasant sect, poverty-stricken and without a leader. Assistance came eventually, however, from various sources. The cooperation of Tolstoyans and English Quakers with such philanthropists and humanitarians as Aylmer Maude, an English merchant formerly of St. Petersburg, provided for the persecuted people the opportunity to leave the land of the Czars.

Through their contacts with the English Quakers and other English friends, the attention of the Doukhobors had been directed to Canada — the land of liberty and opportunity. In Canada Clifford Sifton had just begun a new and aggressive immigration policy. His immigration agents in Europe began to concentrate their efforts on the peasants of Central and Eastern Europe. The Doukhobors seemed to fit into his conception of a desirable settler. In his own words, which sparked off some lively controversies, this is the picture of a desirable immigrant for Western Canada: "I think a stalwart peasant in sheepskin coat, born on the soil, whose forefathers have been farmers for ten generations, with a stout wife and halfdozen children, is good quality." <sup>26</sup>

On December 6th, 1898, the Canadian government passed an Order-in-Council which gave exemption from military service to the Doukhobors. The first shipload of these "peculiar people" from the "Wet Mountains" of Caucasia arrived in Halifax on January 24th, 1899. By the end of the summer well over one-third of the Russian Doukhobors had made the transatlantic migration. The 7400 Doukhobors who landed in Canada in 1899 constituted the largest party of immigrants ever to arrive in the country at one time. Although they had been legally admitted and officially welcomed into Canada, debating continued in the House of Commons relative to their desirability as immigrants. Replying to criticism of the Conservative Opposition, Clifford Sifton, Minister of the Interior, spoke of their cleanliness aboard the boats and trains. He agreed with the Prime Minister, Sir Wilfrid Laurier, that a people should not be excluded from Canada "because they have conscientious objections to bearing arms." <sup>27</sup> Mr. Sifton continued his eulogy of these people in his appeal to the House: "I think the House will not agree with the suggestion that because a man may have conscientious objections to bearing arms, that, therefore, he has not courage, therefore he has not those qualities which go to make a good citizen" . . . "I doubt if there are five men in this House who would show the moral courage, who would show the tenacity, who would show the fortitude which these people have shown for the purpose of preserving the faith which they believe to be the right faith." <sup>28</sup>

<sup>25</sup> C. A. Dawson, *Group Settlement*. Toronto: The Macmillan Company of Canada Limited, 1936. p. 4.

<sup>26</sup> Quoted by Dafoe, *op. cit.* p. 142.

<sup>27</sup> Quoted by J. F. C. Wright in *Slava Bohu*, Toronto: Farrar and Rinehart, Inc., 1940, p. 135.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 135, 136.



Had the Honorable Minister given a little closer study to the philosophy and character traits of the Doukhobors, he might have foreseen, that this "tenacity" would also find expression in stubborn resistance to government laws and regulations in the next few decades in Canada. At first, the evidence seemed to prove the contrary. In April, 1901, the Minister of Justice reported to the Canadian House of Commons on these immigrants, and in his statement he declared "... not a single offence has been committed by the Doukhobors; they were law-abiding, and if good conduct was a recommendation, they were good immigrants."<sup>29</sup>

The "Sons of Freedom" have constituted a difficult problem for Canadian authorities, especially in the Department of Education and in the Department of Justice, not only in wartime, but in peacetime as well. During World War II, the Doukhobors were one of the special problem groups for Alternative Service Officers. In British Columbia they failed to get their cooperation for any type of Alternative Service, whether this meant work in camps or in essential industry.

In 1899, however, these problems were not foreseen and the Canadian Government was prepared to make special concessions and generous grants to these people. Although they came in such large numbers, this fact apparently did not provide any extraordinary problems for the government immigration organization. The basis of the Canadian Land Settlement policy was the conditional grant of free land to bona fide single male agriculturists and heads of families. It was known that the Doukhobors had expressed the desire to settle in compact, closed settlements. It was also known, that they wished to practice some form of communism. These wishes were granted as there was a precedent for assigning blocks of homestead land to another immigrant group. The Mennonites who settled in Manitoba after 1873, and who have been mentioned earlier in this chapter, had received their homesteads in two areas known as "East Reserve" and "West Reserve".

The government found it more feasible to reserve several districts for the 7400 Doukhobors, than to place them in a single large block containing approximately 500,000 acres. Since the Doukhobors had lived in three provinces in Russia, the proposal to place them in a similar number of colonies in the Northwest met with their approval. Two colonies were established in the northeast corner of what was then called the Assiniboia Territory. The "Thunder Hill" colony which was 70 miles from Yorkton, contained 6 townships, and the South colony with an annex called Devil's Lake colony, about 30 miles from Yorkton, contained 15 townships. The third reserve, located in the Saskatchewan Territory, contained 20 townships, but here only even-numbered sections were reserved for Doukhobors. This together with the fact that the settlement on its southern fringe was only 20 miles from Saskatoon, accounts for the "inroads of secularism" according to Professor Dawson, and for "the retreat of the Doukhobor Community from this Saskatch-

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<sup>29</sup> Quoted in Article on "Doukhobors", Encyclopedia Britannica.

ewan district.”<sup>30</sup> A fairly large number of the more radical members of the sect moved to the Kootenay District of British Columbia. Here, as already mentioned, there was considerable friction between the Doukhobor Community and civic authorities, largely due to the fact that the Doukhobors did not acknowledge any state authority and gave their undivided allegiance to their leader, Peter Verigin.

As a body, the Doukhobors never approved of Alternative Service during World War II as an acceptable expression of their pacifist position.

Besides these four historic pacifist groups there were at least 20 other religious denominations and sects represented in A.S.W. projects to which reference will be made in Chapter VI. These other religious groups are not described here since they were not given any special status with regard to military service at the time of their immigration into Canada. Moreover, many of the denominations from which these conscientious objectors came do not hold the doctrine of nonresistance as a tenet of their faith.

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<sup>30</sup> Dawson, *op. cit.*, p. 10.

## Chapter II

### ORGANIZATION AND PREPARATION OF HISTORIC PEACE CHURCHES FOR ALTERNATIVE SERVICE

During the decade preceding World War II the Canadian Mennonites were probably more keenly aware of the deteriorating international situation and of the growing menace to world peace than most of their fellow-citizens. The fact that so many of their number had in recent years come into Canada to escape from the revolution, militarism, and tyranny of Soviet Russia, as well as their many connections with Mennonite groups in Western Europe, may account for this feeling of concern and apprehension. To the Mennonites the rise of Hitler, the aggression of Fascism, as seen in Ethiopia, the Spanish Civil War, and the expansionist policy of Japan in Asia, were not only serious threats to world peace, but also indirect threats to their own historic position of nonresistance.

When in 1936 Mennonite leaders from various countries of the world gathered in the Netherlands to commemorate the four hundredth anniversary of Menno Simons' renunciation of the papacy, they expressed their concern in this matter in a historic document which they called the "Mennonite Peace Manifesto." This "Manifesto" was prepared after consultation with various Mennonite groups and individuals in Brazil, Canada, Holland, Paraguay, the United States and Switzerland. The document is an affirmation of their peace position and reads as follows:

We, the undersigned Mennonite groups, organizations, and individuals, from various parts of the world,

believing in the Gospel of Jesus Christ which calls men to promote peace and to stand against the sin of war,

and being convinced that God's condemnation falls upon the terrible means and measures of war, which are now being prepared by all nations in constantly increasing volume,

call upon all Mennonites everywhere to fulfill the task of the propagation of the Gospel of peace which God has entrusted to us in the history of our Mennonite forefathers.

We therefore appeal to all brethren and sisters to witness vigorously to our peace principles in our congregations everywhere, and to witness to the world our desire to render service in the

spirit of Christ. Let us labor together, that we may accomplish this service of love, and also that we may give spiritual and material help to our brethren who are convinced that God has called them to refuse military service, or who may be called upon to suffer for their peace convictions.<sup>1</sup>

Among the twenty signatures attached to this "Manifesto", there are two names of outstanding leaders of the Canadian Mennonites, David Toews and C. F. Klassen. Both, Bishop D. Toews, for many years chairman of the Canadian Mennonite Board of Colonization, and Mr. C. F. Klassen, leader in relief and immigration services, were taking an active part in the negotiations with the Canadian Government for an acceptable form of Alternative Service during the early part of World War II.

That the matter of exemption from military service was of vital concern to the Mennonites, especially of Western Canada, is evidenced by the fact that already three years before the outbreak of the war, in the fall of 1936 Bishop David Toews was sent to Ottawa to confer with Government officials. The primary purpose of these consultations seems to have been a clarification of the status of the Russländer-Mennonites who were not covered by any special order-in-council.

Following these consultations, Mr. F. C. Blair, Acting Deputy Minister of Immigration, in a letter to Bishop Toews, dated November 2, 1936, explained the position of Mennonites in regard to military service. In this letter Mr. Blair points out that

"all exemption from military service that now exists or has existed in Canada since Confederation in 1867 is *by statutes, not by Order-in-Council.*"<sup>2</sup> An order-in-council passed in September, 1872, assuring those early Mennonite settlers that they would be regarded as exempt from military service, did not add or detract in any way from the Statute

... The Governor-in-Council has not now and never had authority to grant exemption to persons who are not entitled to it by Statute. What the Order-in-Council did was merely to define certain religious bodies as coming within the exempted classes, and the exemption as expressed in the law is available to 'Persons who from the doctrines of their religion are averse to bearing arms or rendering personal military service, under such conditions as are prescribed.'<sup>3</sup>

According to the above interpretation, there was no basic difference in the status of the Kanadier-Mennonites and the Russländer-Mennonites with regard to exemption from military service. That an order-in-council does not confer any new privilege, but applies existing statutes

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<sup>1</sup> Private Papers of the late C. F. Klassen, Abbotsford, B.C. (Hereafter: Klassen, Private Papers).

<sup>2</sup> Author's italics. The Order in Council referred to here was provisional; the "official" Order-in-Council was passed almost a year later. See Appendix A.

<sup>3</sup> F. C. Blair to David Toews. Klassen, Private Papers.

to certain groups who are exempted by law, was often overlooked by both Government officials as well as by Mennonite leaders of both groups in the years to come.

Mr. Blair closes his letter with an assuring note. After pointing out, that there were no orders-in-council in effect at the time which would have any bearing on this subject, he adds that

it is not necessary that there be any Orders as the law is perfectly clear and not only Mennonites but any others who can establish from the doctrines of their religion that they should not perform military service, may claim exemption. No resident of Canada need become restless about the matter or think it is necessary to take some action at the present time. In the event of Canada being drawn into war there would be plenty of time then for persons who are exempt under law to claim that exemption.<sup>4</sup>

By 1939, however, the international situation was of such a nature, that the Mennonites, as well as many other Canadians, did become "restless" and leaders of the Historic Peace Churches felt that the time had come to "take some action". Because of geographical isolation, the Mennonites of Ontario had had little contact with the Mennonites in the prairie provinces in earlier years. Moreover, there was a difference in cultural and religious background between the Mennonites of Ontario and those of the West. The majority of the former had a Swiss background; the latter were almost exclusively of Dutch extraction. As a result of these and other factors, organization and preparation for Alternative Service developed at first independently in Eastern and Western Canada, although along somewhat parallel lines. A brief sketch of the rise and growth of organized activity just prior to, and during World War II, will now be given.

### **I. ORGANIZATION OF THE EASTERN CHURCHES<sup>5</sup>**

When the international situation in the early months of 1939 showed a definite trend toward war in which Canada might become involved, several Peace Churches in Ontario considered the advisability of presenting to the Canadian Government memorials which would re-affirm their position in relation to war and military service. Committees were appointed by these Churches which were authorized to draft and present to the Government in Ottawa such documents.

The committees of the Mennonite Brethren in Christ (since 1948 the "United Missionary Church") and the Brethren in Christ (Tunker) prepared their respective memorials in the spring of 1939. Members of these committees felt that joint-action in this important matter would be

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<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>5</sup> For the following information the writer is indebted to the records of the Historic Peace Churches, 10 Union Street East, Waterloo, Ontario. (Hereafter: Records of H.P.C.)

advisable, and consequently joint-committee meetings were arranged later in the year. The Peace Problems Committee of the Mennonite Church (Old) was represented unofficially at one of these meetings.

At these meetings the statements prepared by the committees representing the three churches mentioned above, were examined and found to be in essential agreement. The best method of presenting these documents to the Government was considered, and it was finally decided, that the committees of the Mennonite Brethren in Christ and the Brethren in Christ (Tunker) would forward their respective statements under one cover to the Prime Minister. The Mennonite Church (Old) and the Society of Friends had, through their authorized representatives, at various times in past years prepared and forwarded to Ottawa official statements concerning their position on war and military service. As already indicated, these actions were all taken prior to the outbreak of war in September, 1939.

During the first year of the war the leaders of the various pacifist groups and Peace Churches realized more and more the increasing gravity of their wartime problems. Many of them also realized that united action would not only be profitable and mutually beneficial, but also absolutely necessary for a successful solution of these problems. Almost every group had by this time appointed a "peace problems committee" to deal with questions of military service. The Peace Problems Committee of the Brethren in Christ took the initiative in this matter and through its Bishop, E. J. Swalm, a joint-meeting of a number of Peace Churches was called.

On July 22, 1940, the Conference of Historic Peace Churches of Ontario was born. This important meeting was held in the Erb Street Mennonite Church in Waterloo, Ontario. In addition to the three church bodies referred to above, there were present also representatives of the Old Order Mennonites, the Amish, the United Mennonite Churches of Ontario and the Ontario District Conference of the Mennonite Brethren Church. (The last two bodies were composed largely of Russländer-Mennonites).

The Conference was organized with Bishop E. J. Swalm as chairman, and Rev. J. Harold Sherk of the Mennonite Brethren in Christ as secretary. The attitude of the Society of Friends toward war and military service was brought to the attention of the Conference through a letter from the Canadian Friends Service Committee. In this letter the Friends informed the meeting concerning a project for non-military national service which they were proposing to the Canadian Government, and invited the churches represented at this Conference to co-operate with them in this matter. After careful consideration of this proposal, the Conference passed a resolution to invite the Friends to join the association of Peace Churches. The Society of Friends was also informed that further study would be given to the proposition of a non-military national service. As a result of this action the Service Committee, representing the three branches of Friends in Canada, attended the second joint-meeting of Historic Peace Churches on Septem-

ber 3, 1940. On this occasion the Society of Friends was officially accepted into the Conference of Historic Peace Churches. The name, "Conference of Historic Peace Churches" was also adopted at this Second Conference. A little later the Old Order Amish and the Old Order Dunkards also joined the organization.

This Second Conference of Historic Peace Churches also decided to send a delegation of three men, appointed by the Military Problems Committee, to Ottawa in order to interview officials of the Department of National War Services concerning the question of non-military national service and regarding any other questions which might arise.

According to Rev. J. B. Martin, a member of this delegation to Ottawa, they were given a rather cool reception by Justice T. C. Davies, Associate Deputy Minister of National War Services. When the delegates, however, made it clear to Justice Davies, that they had not come to ask for any favors, but to offer their services to the Government in some kind of civilian work, the atmosphere changed. All later contacts with Justice Davies were very friendly and helpful.<sup>6</sup>

The one concrete result of this first interview with Government officials was the plan to register the man-power of the Historic Peace Churches in the event a civilian service would be organized for conscientious objectors. In Ontario this registration was carried out through denominational organizations, so that each group would have a file of its own registrants and the Committee on Military Problems would have a file of the registrants of all Historic Peace Churches.

Before consideration can be given to the mission of the special delegation to Ottawa, which offered the services of conscientious objectors to the Dominion Government, the pattern of organization among the Mennonites in Western Canada deserves some attention and study.

## II. ORGANIZATION OF THE WESTERN CHURCHES

In the account of the immigration of the Mennonites into Western Canada it has been intimated that the two groups which entered the country in the 1870's and in the 1920's respectively, had grown apart in their 50 years of separation. Their historical experience and development had been so different in Russia and Canada that they found it difficult to speak with one voice to the outside world. The threat of war, however, temporarily created a favorable atmosphere for the Kanadier and the Russländer to seek a solution to their common problems by united action. After several consultations with leaders of various groups, Bishop David Toews of Rosthern, Saskatchewan, took the initiative in calling a joint-meeting of the various branches of the Mennonite faith. This historic meeting took place on May 15, 1939,

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<sup>6</sup> Cf. Report of J. B. Martin on "The Churches and Official Contacts with the Government". Records of H.P.C.

in the Mennonite Brethren Church at Winkler, Manitoba.<sup>7</sup> Of the ten invited groups, the following nine were represented by approximately 230 delegates: General Conference Mennonite Church, Mennonite Brethren Church, Mennonite Church (Old), Evangelical Mennonite Brethren Church, Klein-Gemeinde, Old Colony Church, Church of God (Holdeman), Rudnerweider Church and the Hutterian Brethren.

Bishop David Toews, who was elected chairman of the meeting, called the attention of the delegates to the grave political situation then existing in Europe and expressed his fears, that war appeared to be imminent. For this reason it would be highly desirable, Bishop Toews pointed out, if all groups who profess the principle of nonresistance would unite in the expression of their position. After a number of important papers had been presented to the Conference on both the biblical principles of nonresistance as well as on the expression of this position in some form of Alternative Service, the meeting was opened for discussion. The subject of a substitute service (German: Ersatzdienst) aroused a lively controversy and revealed the sharp cleavage which existed in the Mennonite Brotherhood on this question. The spokesmen for the more recent immigrants from Russia were generally in favor of some form of Alternative War Service, including even service in the non-combatant medical corps, while the conservative churches, mostly composed of Kanadier-Mennonites, at first rejected any kind of compulsory service in lieu of the military draft. In his analysis of this "ideological" division, Dr. E. K. Francis suggests that an explanation can be found in the different experiences which the two groups had had in the First World War, when the Russian Mennonites in Canada were completely exempted in accordance with the agreement of 1873. Their brethren in Russia, on the other hand, had been serving either in forest camps or in semi-military medical outfits, and had found the arrangement as a whole satisfactory.<sup>8</sup>

The Conference in Winkler finally tabled the question of an Alternative Service in wartime, since it was not as yet a pressing issue. A resolutions committee presented several resolutions to the delegates, all of which emphasized the basic agreement of all groups on the biblical teaching of nonresistance. Finally, an interim committee was elected which was authorized to call another meeting of all groups represented as soon as necessary.

During the next few months world events moved swiftly to the brink of war. On September 10, 1939, Canada declared war against Germany. The Peace Churches were slow in organizing and this probably for two reasons: In the first place, there was no conscription in Canada; and secondly, there was a lack of unity among the Western Mennonite groups on the question of Alternative Service. The increasing demands of the war effort on man-power and materials compelled the Canadian

<sup>7</sup> David P. Reimer, "*Erfahrungen der Mennoniten in Kanada während des zweiten Weltkrieges, 1939 - 1945.*" Printed by Derksen Printers Ltd., Steinbach, Manitoba.

<sup>8</sup> Francis, *op. cit.* p. 235.



Government to take new and far-reaching measures in 1940. On June 21st, royal assent was given to "the National Resources Mobilization Act". This Act, which authorized the Governor-in-Council to make such "... orders and regulations, requiring persons to place themselves, their services and their property at the disposal of His Majesty in the right of Canada..."<sup>9</sup> also affected those groups which were exempt from military service.

The conservative Mennonite churches of Southern Manitoba decided to organize independently. On September 16th, 1940, the so-called "Committee of Elders (German: Ältestenkomitee)" was elected, representing the following eight church groups: Sommerfelder, Chortitzer, Bergthaler, Rudnerweider, Kleingemeinde, Church of God (Holdeman), Evangelical Mennonite Brethren Church, and Old Colony Church.<sup>10</sup> The Executive Committee, which represented this organization in all matters affecting conscientious objectors, consisted of Bishop P. A. Toews, Bishop David Schulz and Rev. J. F. Barkman.<sup>11</sup>

In the other three provinces of the West, the influence of the Russländer-Mennonites was probably predominating, and public opinion in Mennonite communities had been moving steadily in the direction of favoring Alternative Service in the non-combatant medical corps. Rev. B. B. Janz, of Coaldale, Alberta, the chief spokesman for the Russländer-Mennonites, had been in contact with the Mobilization Board in Edmonton, where his offer of Alternative Service in the Medical Corps had received a very favorable response. The Saskatchewan churches, with a strong representation of Kanädier-Mennonites, also seemed to be in favor of service in the medical corps, if it could be organized under civilian command. These developments in Alberta and Saskatchewan encouraged some Mennonite leaders in Manitoba to make a final attempt to form one all-inclusive organization in this province and to bring the two groups together on the question of Alternative Service. On October 14th, 1940, representatives of nearly all the Mennonite groups held a joint-meeting in the Northend Mennonite Brethren Church, 621 College Avenue, Winnipeg.<sup>12</sup> Efforts to heal the schism failed, and henceforth two committees represented the Mennonites of Western Canada before the Government. It would appear, that this schism was unnecessary and could have been avoided, with a little more tolerance and moderation on the part of both, Russländer as well as Kanädier. Later, both groups had to make concessions, and almost unanimously rejected any kind of service in uniform and under military command, but accepted various forms of civilian alternative service not directly connected with the war effort. It was not until June, 1941, however, that the Canadian Government announced that Alternative Service would be provided for conscientious objectors. It will be evident from the following pages that in developing plans for Alternative Service the

<sup>9</sup> *Statutes of Canada*, 1940, Chapter 13, p. 43.

<sup>10</sup> Reimer, *op. cit.* p. 6.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 7.

<sup>12</sup> Reimer, *op. cit.* pp. 79 - 88.

Canadian Government was not only conscious of the understanding reached with the forefathers of certain groups of Canadians when they came to Canada but also took into account the recommendations of the leaders of the Historic Peace Churches and other interested groups during the early years of World War II.

### **III. MENNONITES OFFER ALTERNATIVE SERVICES TO THE GOVERNMENT**

In our study of the organization of the Peace Churches in Ontario the fact was mentioned that the Canadian Friends Service Committee presented to the first meeting of the Conference of the Historic Peace Churches in July, 1940, certain proposals for a non-military national service. This idea of a civilian Alternative Service found widespread and favorable response among the Ontario Mennonites and Brethren in Christ. In Western Canada, as has been pointed out, there was also a strong movement, especially among the Russländer-Mennonites, to offer to the Government an Alternative Service. After the complete break with the Committee of Elders, the Military Problems Committee of Western Canada (representing mostly the Mennonite Brethren Church and the General Conference Mennonites) contacted the Military Problems Committee of the Historic Peace Churches of Ontario for possible joint-action. On November 12th, 1940, a delegation of eight members, four from the West and four from the East, met in Ottawa, where they were given permission to have an interview with the two Associate Deputy Ministers of National War Services: Honorable Mr. T. C. Davies and Major-General L. R. LaFleche. The question of a civilian national service was presented but apparently did not find a very favorable response. On the following day, November 13th, the delegates presented to the Ministers mentioned above, a memorandum, in which they outlined once more their proposals and pleaded for a consideration of their offer. Since this document contains a number of suggestions, which were later incorporated in the Alternative Service program as adopted by the government, it will be quoted at some length. After a reference to the National War Services Regulations, 1940, which in Section 19 (2) provide for non-combatant service under civil authority for conscientious objectors, the following proposals are made:

It is our conviction that the young men whom we represent would not respond favorably to the suggestion that they should do work in military camps. The matter of whether or not uniform was worn would in our opinion not affect the situation. We feel bound, therefore, to respectfully renew our offer to perform work along the lines of our former proposals and to make the following suggestions.

1. That the work should be of an agricultural or forestry nature, combining if possible reforestation, setting up of nurseries as needed, land reclamation and farm improvement.
2. That first aid courses might be given as part of the training

of the men while in camp in order to equip them to render service in the event of epidemics or other emergency resulting from the war.

3. That this work might be done on government-owned land, in order that the benefit from the labour expended should accrue to the country as a whole.

4. That sites might be chosen after consultation with the Department of Agriculture and the Department of Lands and Forests; and that supervisors might be selected from such Departments.

5. That for this purpose the Dominion be considered as having three divisions:

- a) British Columbia — Alberta
- b) Saskatchewan — Manitoba
- c) Ontario and the East

It is our belief that there would be sufficient men in our Churches to maintain a personnel of twenty to fifty workers in each of three camps located in the sections mentioned. (The delegates must have been thinking of a short term of service, comparable to basic training in army camps — hence the small number). This figure would no doubt be increased appreciably if conscientious objectors who are members of other religious bodies, were included in such a project.

We feel that such a solution would satisfy our members of military age, and that it should satisfy any reasonable objection on the part of bodies who feel that no distinction in the matter of service should be made on grounds of conscience.

In closing we would say that the absence of definite locations in these proposals is due to our feeling that the work should be done on government lands.

We wish to thank you for the courtesies extended to us and to assure you of our desire to continue to be of help in arriving at an arrangement which will be satisfactory to all concerned.<sup>13</sup>

This memorandum bears the following signatures: E. J. Swalm, Duntroon, Ontario; J. B. Martin, Waterloo, Ontario; David Toews, Rosthern, Saskatchewan; B. B. Janz, Coaldale, Alberta; Fred Haslam, Toronto, Ontario; J. H. Janzen, Waterloo, Ontario, J. Gerbrandt, Drake, Saskatchewan; C. F. Klassen, Winnipeg, Manitoba.<sup>14</sup>

From the above proposal it is evident, that the delegates were strongly influenced in their thinking by the experiences of the Mennonites in Russia. Forestry work on government-owned land had been carried on by the Russian Mennonites for almost 40 years — from 1880 to the end of World War I. Such arrangement would make it possible for the

<sup>13</sup> Memorandum to Associate Deputy Minister of National War Services. Klassen, Private Papers.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*

men to work in larger units, as well as being segregated from a critical public. It would also make it much easier to provide religious supervision and instruction.

Apparently these proposals were not acceptable to the Associate Deputy Ministers. After a week had passed by without any further information on the fate of the memorandum, the representatives of the Historic Peace Churches once more approached Major-General La Fleche on November 21st on this matter. Major-General La Fleche informed them, that any civilian service of national importance would not be possible, and that the Department of National War Services was considering some form of non-combatant military service for conscientious objectors. Recommendations to that effect would be made to the Cabinet in the near future.

This reply was a great disappointment to the delegates. They realized that such a move would inevitably bring court-martials and imprisonment for most of their young men. After a careful consideration of what might be done, the group decided to make a final appeal directly to the Honorable J. G. Gardiner, Minister of National War Services.<sup>15</sup>

Through the good offices of Mr. W. H. Moore, M.P., an appointment was made with the Honorable Minister. On November 22nd, the delegation presented a brief memorandum to the Honorable Mr. Gardiner. In this statement of their position they refer once more to the proposals already presented to the Deputy Minister and re-affirm their objection to any type of service under military administration. They conclude their memorandum with the following plea:

We, representatives of our Churches are anxious to continue to be of service in working out a satisfactory solution of this problem and as the matter is referred to you may we express the hope that the Government may see its way to grant the suggested civilian service to those of our number who are unable to accept military service of any kind.<sup>16</sup>

According to J. B. Martin,<sup>17</sup> who was a member of this delegation, the memorandum was "kindly" received by Mr. Gardiner. The Minister seemed to be sympathetic towards the idea of civilian service for conscientious objectors, and mentioned several possibilities of which he had been thinking himself.

That the idea of a civilian Alternative Service was gaining favor among leading members of Parliament is evident from the following. Three days after the interview mentioned above, on November 25th, 1940, Mr. Walter Tucker, M.P. (Rosthern), was speaking in the debate in reply to the speech from the throne. Mr. Tucker criticized those members of Parliament who would deprive conscientious objectors of

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<sup>15</sup> J. B. Martin, *The Churches and Official Contacts with the Government*, p. 5, Records of H.P.C.

<sup>16</sup> Memorandum to Honorable J. G. Gardiner. Klassen, Private Papers.

<sup>17</sup> Martin, *Op. cit.* p. 6.

their civil rights. He called attention to their readiness to serve Canada in harmony with their convictions.

What do we find today? Mr. Tucker continued. We find that within the last ten days representatives of the Mennonites of Western Canada, the Mennonites of Ontario, the Quakers in Canada and the Tunkers came to Ottawa to interview the ministry of national war services to say to that department that while they do not believe in bearing arms, they are prepared to go into any branch of the service of the country where they could help to save life, where they could help the wounded, and for other services of that kind. It did not matter to them whether it was dangerous work or otherwise. All they ask is that they shall not be asked to bear arms, and they have asked too, that their operations should be made under civilian auspices . . . They appreciate the rights of citizenship in Canada. They wanted to show their appreciation, and they were not trying to get out of doing their full share. All this was done after the Government had exempted them from military service.<sup>18</sup>

These were certainly courageous words, spoken on behalf of an unpopular cause at a crucial time in Canadian history. It is a high tribute to the quality of Canadian democracy, that members of Parliament would assume the responsibility to champion the cause of a religious minority group on the floor of the House. The Mennonites and other conscientious objectors will not forget Mr. Tucker's plea on their behalf.

The chief promoter in Parliament of a civilian national service for conscientious objectors, however, was the Honorable J. G. Gardiner, Minister of National War Services. On March 14th, 1941, during the debate on the War Appropriations Bill, Mr. Gardiner made reference to the offer of the Mennonites to serve their country in a non-military capacity. In reviewing his contacts with the representatives of the Historic Peace Churches, he stated that "they (the Mennonites) were prepared to attend at camps and take training in first aid and ambulance work, indicating that they had no objections whatever to facing danger . . . provided they were not asked to kill."

Mr. Gardiner concluded his speech with this observation, "I mentioned the Mennonites because of the liberality, if I might use that expression, of the Mennonite people in making offers to do other things, since they object to military service itself."<sup>19</sup>

Henceforth parliamentary opinion was growing more favorable towards the idea of an Alternative Service under civilian direction. On May 29th, 1941, the Honorable Mr. Gardiner announced in the House of Commons the first call-up for Alternative Service. In the following chapters the development of Government policy relative to Alternative Service will be traced.

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<sup>18</sup> Debates (H.C.), 1941, Vol. I. p. 383.

<sup>19</sup> Debates (H.C.), 1941, Vol. II. p. 1552.

Paul C. French, who has made a comparative study<sup>20</sup> of the C.P.S. (Civilian Public Service) program in the United States and the A.S.W. (Alternative Service Work) program in Canada, comes to the conclusion, that leaders of groups representing conscientious objectors "have very little relationship or influence in the establishment of policy under the Canadian system."<sup>21</sup>

In the light of the facts presented above, this criticism does not seem quite fair. Although the Historic Peace Churches of Canada may not have played such a conspicuous role in shaping Government policy as their brethren across the border, they nevertheless, voiced their views in a clear and courteous manner and as consequent developments proved, their voice was not without effect in establishing A.S.W. Camps in Canada.

Throughout the war years there was a cordial and friendly relationship between Mennonite leaders and the representatives of the Canadian Government. At the end of the War the Historic Peace Churches expressed their appreciation for the kind consideration received in a special letter addressed to the Prime Minister. With this note of gratitude, this chapter on the relations of the Historic Peace Churches to the Government may be appropriately brought to a close.

The letter, dated September 25th, 1945, and addressed to the Right Honorable William Lyon Mackenzie King, reads as follows:

Honorable Sir:

We, the undersigned, duly authorized representatives of the Conference of Historic Peace Churches in Canada, do hereby present a brief statement of our appreciation and gratitude to you and your Government for the kindly consideration you have shown to our participating groups, namely:

Mennonites,  
Brethren in Christ (Tunker),  
Quakers,

during the years of war from which we are presently emerging.

We have, as you are well aware, a traditional and Scriptural background which causes us to hold very strong convictions against taking part in war. The opportunity of service to our country as provided in Alternative Service was with few exceptions very acceptable to us and greatly appreciated.

We believe that your administration in preserving inviolate the right of conscience and the religious liberty of minority groups, exercised a Christian virtue which is the basis of all true democratic government.

We believe this will result in the blessing of the Eternal God resting on yourself and the people of Canada whom you have so efficiently led for an unprecedented length of time.

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<sup>20</sup> See: Report on the handling of conscientious objectors in Canada. Klassen, Private Papers.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid*, p. 17.

We hope and pray that our people may ever be mindful of this great kindness and that the Parliament of Canada may continue to extend such liberties in the future.

Respectfully submitted,

by

E. J. Swalm, Chairman,  
Historic Peace Churches,  
J. B. Martin, Chairman,  
Committee on Military Problems,  
Elven Shantz, Secretary,  
Committee on Military Problems.<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>22</sup> Letter, E. J. Swalm to Mackenzie King, Records of H.P.C.

### **Chapter III**

## **GOVERNMENT REGULATIONS RE: POSTPONEMENT OF MILITARY TRAINING AND ALTERNATIVE SERVICE**

Alternative Service during World War II was provided for a group of Canadian citizens who were specially designated by law. In the National Selective Service Regulations they are described thus:

'person to whom this part applies' means a person to whom a postponement order has been granted under section thirteen of the National Selective Service Mobilization Regulations or the National War Services Regulations 1940 (Recruits) on the ground that he is a Doukhobor, Mennonite or conscientious objector.<sup>1</sup>

Doukhobors and Mennonites are mentioned here in contradistinction to "conscientious objectors", because they had been granted exemption from military service by special orders-in-council. In popular usage, however, they were also referred to by the latter term. Although the origin of the name "conscientious objectors" remains obscure, it was used during World War I to designate persons whose conscience forbade them to perform military service. Since then the term has been popularly applied to all those who for religious reasons object to war and military training. In this chapter the legal status and official treatment of conscientious objectors during World War I will be briefly reviewed followed by a discussion of the regulations and procedures of the Canadian Government during World War II.

### **I. GOVERNMENT REGULATIONS FOR CONSCIENTIOUS OBJECTORS DURING WORLD WAR I<sup>2</sup>**

When conscription was introduced into Canada by the Military Service Act of 1917, the bill contained the so-called "conscience clause". This clause exempted any one

who conscientiously objects to the undertaking of combatant service, and is prohibited from so doing by the tenets and articles of faith in effect on the sixth day of July, 1917, of an organized

<sup>1</sup> P.C. 246, 250 (c) (As amended by P.C. 2821, April 7, 1943.)

<sup>2</sup> cf. **Report on the Operations of Military Mobilization in Canada During World War II**. Vol. 23, Section 5. Research and Statistics Branch, Department of Labor, Ottawa. (Hereafter: Report on O.M.M.)



religious denomination existing and well recognized in Canada at such date, and to which he in good faith belongs.<sup>3</sup>

It will be observed at once, that this statute did not exempt from all military service, but that the exemption permitted by the Act was from combatant service only. Since almost all members of the Historic Peace Churches lived in rural areas at the time, following agricultural pursuits, they were in many instances granted exemption by local tribunals because of their being employed in an essential and basic industry. There were a few, however, who were ordered by the tribunals to perform non-combatant service in the army, and upon refusal to comply, they were penalized with jail sentences of varying length.

During the First World War there existed no legislative provision which would have permitted conscientious objectors to serve their country in a national civilian service. Hence, if a man could establish his status as a conscientious objector to the satisfaction of the Mobilization Board, he enjoyed complete exemption from any special obligation to the state for the duration of the war. The attempts of some local boards to order men to perform non-combatant military service were exceptional. This fact of complete exemption from military training and service caused strong resentment in communities in which there were a large number of "conchies" (popular designation for conscientious objectors) because it was felt that these men enjoyed privileges without commensurate responsibilities.

Conscientious objectors did not constitute the only group, however, which was exempted from military service during World War I. In accordance with the Military Service Act, 1917, exemptions were divided into two main categories: exemptions awarded on national grounds and exemptions awarded on personal grounds. A brief summary of these grounds is presented here.

#### A. NATIONAL GROUNDS OF EXEMPTION

1. *Present occupation.* — If the occupation held by the man at the time of his call-up was considered to be in the national interest.
2. *Prospective employment.* — If the man expected to enter into war or essential industry within a reasonable time.
3. *Education or training.* — If the man was a student or trainer in a course which was recognized to be in the national interest.

#### B. PERSONAL GROUNDS FOR EXEMPTION

1. *Financial obligations.* — Men whose withdrawal from the home into military service would result in grave financial hardship to dependents.
2. *Business obligations.* — Men upon whom depended the prosperity or existence of a business.

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<sup>3</sup> Statutes of Canada, I e 11(f) 7-8 George V, 1917.

3. *Domestic position.* — Men upon whom depended persons incapable of taking care of themselves for reasons other than financial.

4. *Ill health or infirmity.* — Men who suffered from partial or total physical or mental disability.

5. *Conscientious objectors.* — Men who objected to undertake combatant service on religious or conscientious grounds.

6. *Enemy aliens or British subjects of enemy origin.* — Men who were born in an enemy country or whose mother tongue was an enemy language.<sup>4</sup>

It should be noted here in connection with the exemption of the above categories, that the term "exemption" was used instead of "postponement". During World War II military training was "postponed" or "deferred", and the word "exempted" is avoided in the Regulations.

Not all Mennonites during World War I applied for exemption from military training on conscientious grounds. On January 9th, 1917, the Ottawa Journal Press reported that "out of a total Mennonite population in Canada of 30,000, forty Mennonite young men have enlisted contrary to the principles of their church."<sup>5</sup> During World War II the number of those who enlisted for active combat in the army was much larger, to which fact reference will be made later.

## II. GOVERNMENT REGULATIONS FOR CONSCIENTIOUS OBJECTORS DURING WORLD WAR II

Prior to the passing of the National Resources Mobilization Act on June 21st, 1940, there seems to be no public commitment on the part of the Canadian Government on the status of conscientious objectors with the exception of one announcement by the Prime Minister. On June 18th, 1940, during the debate on the emergency powers of the Government, Mr. Mackenzie King made the following reference to conscientious objectors:

There is one other matter, the only one to which I shall refer in conclusion. It is the question asked as to the exemption of certain religious groups in the matter of military service. I wish solemnly to assure the House and the country that the government has no desire and no intention to disturb the existing rights of exemption from the bearing of arms which are enjoyed by the members of certain religious groups in Canada, as for instance the Mennonites. We are determined to respect these rights to the full.<sup>6</sup>

A few weeks later, the Honorable J. G. Gardiner, Minister of National War Services, again made reference to groups that would not be subject to the call-up. In reviewing Canada's war effort in Parliament,

<sup>4</sup> cf. Report, on O.M.M. op. cit. p. 52.

<sup>5</sup> Ottawa Journal Press, January 9, 1917.

<sup>6</sup> Debates (H.C.), 1940, Vol. 1, p. 904.

Mr. Gardiner, after listing seven other groups which were exempted by law, also mentioned religious objectors:

Under an Order-in-Council passed in 1873 certain privileges with respect to military service were given to a sect of persons known as Mennonites, and under an Order-in-Council passed in 1898 certain privileges with respect to military service were granted to the sect known as Doukhobors. It is the intention of the government to recognize these Orders-in-Council and a method of dealing with the individuals who feel they are entitled to the benefits of these Orders-in-Council will be worked out and duly announced.<sup>7</sup>

Although the legal position of these groups was clarified by the National War Services Regulations, 1940, (Recruits) as consolidated in 1941 and approved by Order-in-Council P.C. 1822 (March 18, 1941) a "method of dealing" with conscientious objectors with regard to Alternative Service was not worked out until the early summer of 1941. For the purpose of this study, two paragraphs in the above Regulations are especially relevant. These are Section 18 (1) and Section 19 (1).<sup>8</sup> The first section deals with the position of Mennonites and Doukhobors.

18 (1) Members of the denomination of Christians called Mennonites and members of the community of Doukhobors who immigrated to Canada pursuant to the arrangements evidenced by the Order-in-Council of August 13th, 1873, and by the Order-in-Council of December 6th, 1898, respectively, or the descendants of such immigrants who have continued without interruption to be members of the aforesaid sect or denomination of Christians or of the aforesaid Community of Doukhobors and who have resided without interruption in Canada, shall be entitled, subject as provided in these regulations, to the postponement of their military training.<sup>9</sup>

"As provided in these regulations" meant that members of the two groups mentioned above were not automatically exempted from military training but had to meet certain conditions to qualify. In this respect the procedure for Mennonites, (a name which in the Regulations is strangely restricted to the immigrants of 1874 - 1880 and their descendants,) and Doukhobors was similar to that of conscientious objectors and hence the steps to be taken by both classifications will be discussed after quoting the provision for "conscientious objectors."

19 (1) Any man who claims that he conscientiously objects to bearing arms or to undertaking combatant service may, at his own expense, apply for an order of direction of the Board postponing his military training which order or direction may be given by the Board to the Divisional Registrar if the Board is satisfied that such

<sup>7</sup> Debates (H.C.), 1940, Vol. III, p. 2123.

<sup>8</sup> See Appendix B for Sections 18 and 19 of National War Services Regulations, 1940 (Recruits).

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*

man conscientiously objects to bearing arms or to undertaking combatant service.<sup>10</sup>

In order to have their military training postponed, Mennonites, Doukhobors, and conscientious objectors had to take the following steps:

1. As a rule they had to report for medical examination along with other men of their age class.

2. Within "eight clear days" of the date appearing on his "Notice-Medical Examination" the conscientious objectors desiring postponement of his military training had to make an application<sup>11</sup> in writing to the Divisional Registrar for an order of direction of such postponement.

If upon application for a postponement order, the Mobilization Board was satisfied that the applicant was either a member of the denomination of Christians called Mennonites or a member of the Community of Doukhobors or that the applicant conscientiously objected, by reason of religious training or belief, to war in any form, his military training was postponed. In the case of Mennonites and Doukhobors, additional proof had to be given that their membership in their respective organization had been continuous and without interruption and that their residence in Canada had also been without interruption. The question may be raised as to what constituted the essential difference in the treatment of Mennonites and Doukhobors on the one hand, and conscientious objectors on the other. Generally, Mobilization Boards made the following distinction in the early part of the War:

Mennonites (used in restricted sense as indicated above) and Doukhobors had to prove their membership in their respective organizations; conscientious objectors (which included also many Mennonites) had to prove that they conscientiously objected to military training on religious grounds. As the war progressed, Mobilization Boards seemed to favor the latter method of procedure in dealing with all conscientious objectors, regardless of their affiliation with a religious denomination or sect.

### 1. How Postponement Decisions Were Arrived at by The Board

"The granting and refusing of postponements involved, more than any other mobilization procedure the use of judgment and opinion. On that account, the Board spared no efforts to make the soundest possible decision."<sup>12</sup> That this was no easy task should be obvious to everyone.<sup>13</sup>

In reviewing a man's application for postponement from military training the Board utilized, when necessary, various agencies. In addition to the questionnaire completed under oath (or by affirmation) by

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<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>11</sup> See form of "Application for an Order Deferring or Postponing Military Training", Appendix C.

<sup>12</sup> Report on O.M.M., *op. cit.* p. 60.

<sup>13</sup> In the writer's examination of relevant correspondence and data, however, he has found that there was a sincere desire on the part of most members of such Boards to arrive at a fair and objective decision.

the applicant, the services of the R.C.M.P., the National Employment Service, and the Registrar were enlisted to check on various points, but particularly the grounds upon which the postponement application had been made.

In connection with the verification of a man's grounds for postponement it should be emphasized that the Registrar, in accordance with Sections 25 (1) of the Mobilization Regulations, had the authority to compel a designated man and any other person he saw fit, to answer any question related to the designated man's application for postponement.<sup>14</sup>

In reply to a letter from the Divisional Registrar of Mobilization District "A", London, Ontario, L. E. Westman, Chief Alternative Service Officer, Ottawa, gave the following grounds on which a man was given a C.O. status by the Mobilization Boards:

(a) Association with a particular sect, such as Mennonites, Doukhobors, Quakers, etc.

(b) Evidence from the clergy or spiritual leader as to the individual's conduct in the past. This may be dangerous, since it places great powers with the clergy, and may be related to financial consideration.

(c) A hearing of this man before a panel chosen to question him; this in my opinion, is seldom conclusive, since the Board chosen has no standards whereby they can measure the man's mind.<sup>15</sup>

Claims to exemption from military training could be set up in the order desired by the applicant. If he claimed postponement on the basis of occupation, some Boards would deal with him without examining his religious convictions. In theory, according to L. E. Westman's view, a man should be able to claim exemption as a farmer, or otherwise, and if he failed to get postponement on that basis, he could still claim deferment on the basis that he was a conscientious objector. In actual practice, however, this did not work, since the sincerity of the applicant was seriously questioned if he tried this procedure. On the other hand it is also true that many conscientious objectors claimed their C.O. status before having had their medical examination, and as a result men of a very low medical category were sent into A.S.W. camps.

Under the National Selective Service Civilian Regulations provision was made that Doukhobors, Mennonites, and conscientious objectors who obtained a postponement from military training until further notice were subject to call for Alternative Service. Since this subject will be dealt with more fully in the next chapter, only a brief description will be given here on Government procedure regarding conscientious objectors who were directed to perform Alternative Service.

1. The conscientious objector, having been recognized as such by the

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<sup>14</sup> cf. Report, loc. cit.

<sup>15</sup> Letter, Westman to Divisional Registrar, July 14, 1943.

Mobilization Board and his military training having been postponed, was referred to the Divisional Alternative Service Officer.

2. The conscientious objector was then called for an interview, either with the Alternative Service Officer or at the local office of N.E.S. (National Employment Service) as the representative of the Alternative Service Officer.

3. If it was found, that the man was already in essential employment (agricultural or non-agricultural), he was left there, provided that he came under an agreement whereby a portion of his earnings was diverted to the Canadian Red Cross Society.

4. If he was not already in essential employment he was directed to essential employment suitable to his skills, subject to the Red Cross deduction.<sup>16</sup>

Provisions under points three and four were not in effect prior to May 1st, 1943, and up to that date all men who were medically fit were directed to work in Alternative Service Work Camps.

## 2. Number, Classification And Distribution of Postponements

It is perhaps not generally known, that conscientious objectors during World War II constituted a rather small percentage of the total number of those who had their military training postponed. Major-General E. L. M. Burns presents the following number and classification of "postponements" under the National Resources Mobilization Act, 1940.<sup>17</sup> See Table I.

TABLE I  
Postponements under the N.R.M. Act, 1940

1. Total postponements requested	746,478
2. Total postponements granted	664,535
(This number includes short, temporary postponements.)	
3. Remaining postponements as of May 7th, 1945	262,634

### BREAKDOWN OF THIS NUMBER

(1) Farmers .....	65%
(2) Essential Industries .....	12%
(3) Students .....	5%
(4) Conscientious Objectors .....	4%
(5) Lumbering .....	2%
(6) Mining .....	2%

<sup>16</sup> Information received in letter from Mr. A. H. Brown, Deputy Minister of Labour, on May 17th, 1956.

<sup>17</sup> cf. E. L. M. Burns, *Manpower in the Canadian Army, 1939 - 1945*. (Toronto: Clarke, Irwin and Company Ltd., 1956,) p. 126.

*Alternative Service*

(7)	Merchant Marine .....	2%
(8)	Compassionate reasons .....	2%
(9)	Fishing .....	1%
(10)	Other classes .....	6%
		<hr/> 100%

Not all of those who applied for postponement of military training on the basis of conscientious objection to military service were given this status by the Mobilization Boards. In answer to a request from Mr. Howard Winkler, M.P., the Honorable J. T. Thorson, Minister of National War Services, tabled the following information in the Canadian House of Commons on May 4th, 1942. See Table II.

TABLE II  
Postponements According to Provinces

<i>Province</i>	<i>Postponements requested</i>	<i>Postponements granted</i>
Prince Edward Island .....	6	2
Nova Scotia .....	10	1
New Brunswick .....	12	2
Quebec .....	108	13
Ontario .....	477	338
Manitoba .....	1095	1039
Saskatchewan .....	265	257
Alberta .....	214	128
British Columbia .....	386	194
Total .....	2573	1974 <sup>18</sup>

From this table it is evident that a severe screening process was conducted by the Mobilization Boards. It may be noted also, that in those provinces, where there was a strong representation of historic pacifist groups, such as the Mennonites and the Doukhobors, the relative percentage of refusals is much lower than in provinces like Quebec or in the Maritimes. This seems to indicate, that conscientious objectors who had no affiliation with a recognized pacifist church or group, had more difficulty to prove their convictions before the Boards than others, who belonged to such organizations.

Shortly after the end of the war, on September 30th, 1945, there were 10,872 persons in Canada classified as postponed conscientious objectors. By provinces their distribution was as follows: See Table III.

<sup>18</sup> Debates (H.C.), 1942, Vol. II, p. 2074.

TABLE III

## Distribution of Conscientious Objectors According to Provinces

1. Manitoba .....	3021
2. Ontario .....	2636
3. Saskatchewan .....	2304
4. British Columbia .....	1665
5. Alberta .....	1184
6. Nova Scotia .....	29
7. Quebec .....	28
8. Prince Edward Island.....	3
9. New Brunswick .....	2
	<hr/>
	10,872 <sup>19</sup>

With regard to racial origin conscientious objectors present a rather interesting picture. Although accurate figures are not available, since several Divisional Registrars did not supply this information to the Chief Alternative Service Officer in Ottawa, the following statistical data has been compiled largely from the records of Mobilization Divisions "B", "E", "J", "M", "N", and "K", which had been made available to the Alternative Service Branch in Ottawa. Since most conscientious objectors were residing in the Mobilization Divisions mentioned, the figures are fairly accurate and representative. Table IV shows 31 racial groups which were represented among conscientious objectors in Canada during World War II. <sup>20</sup>

TABLE IV

## Distribution of C.O.'s According to Racial Origin

1. Dutch .....	4202
2. Russian .....	2083
3. German .....	963
4. English .....	706
5. Scotch .....	235
6. Irish .....	203
7. Ukrainian .....	156
8. Austrian .....	151
9. Norwegian .....	90
10. Polish .....	76
11. French .....	70
12. Swedish .....	62
13. Swiss .....	57
14. Hungarian .....	19

<sup>19</sup> From Records of Research and Statistics Branch, Department of Labour, Ottawa.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*



15.	Italian .....	19
16.	Welsh .....	16
17.	Danish .....	15
18.	Rumanian .....	9
19.	Negro .....	5
20.	Icelandic .....	4
21.	Belgian .....	4
22.	Finnish .....	3
23.	Czech .....	3
24.	Hebrew .....	2
25.	Latvian .....	1
26.	Lithuanian .....	1
27.	Spanish .....	1
28.	Yugoslavian .....	1
29.	Macedonian .....	1
30.	Canadian Indian .....	1
31.	Bulgarian .....	1
32.	Unknown .....	98
Total .....		9,260

Although the Dutch (Mennonites) and the Russians (Doukhobors) constitute more than one half of the total number, there is a good representation of German, English, Scotch and Irish, as well as other groups.

According to Colonel C. P. Stacey, Director of the Historical Section of the Department of National Defence in Ottawa, no statistics are available on the number of Mennonites who enlisted in the armed forces.<sup>21</sup> Dr. E. K. Francis makes several interesting comments on Mennonites in the armed services. After giving the number of conscientious objectors among the Mennonites of Manitoba as being 2453, he continues:

Yet approximately another 2000 young Mennonites had joined the armed forces, mostly voluntarily, and many of them had been serving with distinction; at least one was decorated with the Distinguished Service Cross.<sup>22</sup>

This estimate seems rather high, although it has been indicated before, that the number who joined the armed forces during World War II was much larger than during World War I. Dr. Francis reminds us however, that in judging these figures

one must keep in mind that, at one time, almost 80 per cent of all Mennonites of draft age were ipso facto exempted from military service either as farmers or teachers.<sup>23</sup>

<sup>21</sup> C. P. Stacey in personal interview with the writer.

<sup>22</sup> Francis, *op. cit.* p. 238.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid*, p. 239.

In closing this chapter on regulations and procedures which the Government adopted in its dealing with conscientious objectors, a brief reference to the enforcement of these regulations might be in place. Once their C.O. status had been established, very few conscientious objectors had to be handled by law enforcement officers. The one notable exception was the sect known as Jehovah's Witnesses. Although the Jehovah's Witnesses comprised less than six per cent of the total number of postponed conscientious objectors, they accounted for more than ninety per cent of all prosecutions. (Total prosecutions of all conscientious objectors: 687)

In his historical account of the wartime activities of the Alternative Service Branch of the Department of Labour, J. F. MacKinnon, Chief Alternative Service Officer after L. E. Westman's death, makes this pertinent observation concerning this group: "As a group, and individually, they (Jehovah's Witnesses) were opposed to the principle of Alternative Service as applying to them and were consistently non-co-operative throughout the lifetime of Alternative Service."<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>24</sup> J. F. MacKinnon, **Historical Account of the Wartime Activities of the Department of Labour**. (Alternative Service Branch), 1946. p. 25. Unpublished.

## Chapter IV

### GOVERNMENT POLICY WITH RESPECT TO ALTERNATIVE SERVICE

The policy of the Canadian government with respect to Alternative Service reflects generally the changing conditions during the War with regard to man-power in the country as a whole. In this chapter, a study will be made of legislative authority and policy development as related to Alternative Service. It will be observed that there was a gradual evolution of this policy from an original emphasis on service in camps in National Parks to an emphasis in the last few years of the war on work in agriculture and essential industry.

It was on May 29th, 1941, as indicated previously, when Mr. Gardiner, then Minister of National War Services, announced in the House of Commons the first call-up for Alternative Service. Mennonites, Doukhobors, and conscientious objectors would be 'required to render either three or four months' labour service in lieu of military training and be subject to such further labour service as may be decided in the future.'<sup>1</sup>

The legislative authority for Alternative Service was provided by Order-in-Council P.C. 246, later amended by Order-in-Council P.C. 2821, April 7th, 1943. Section 251 of this Order-in-Council contains the following directives in sub-sections one and two:

251 (1) The Alternative Service Officer may from time to time serve a person to whom this part applies or cause him to be served, either personally or by registered mail, with an order to report at the time and place and to the person therein specified to carry out alternative service.

(2) Every person upon whom an order is served under this section shall comply with the order and shall live in such place or places under such circumstances and perform such alternative service as may from time to time be prescribed.<sup>2</sup>

In May of 1941 Government plans for Alternative Service finally found concrete expression in an arrangement with the Federal Department of Mines and Resources. Camps were to be established in National Parks where Mennonites and conscientious objectors could be sent for their labour service. Doukhobors are not mentioned at this time as

<sup>1</sup> Debates, (H.C.), 1941, Vol. IV, p. 3261.

<sup>2</sup> Order-in-Council P.C. 2821, Section 251, sub-sections (1) and (2).

also being subject to the call-up for Alternative Service.<sup>3</sup> According to George Tunstall, District Forestry Officer, Department of Mines and Resources, A.S.W. camps were established in 1941

because the Government felt it necessary that conscientious objectors should do labour service in lieu of military training. The camps were established in National Parks exclusively, at the time. Later several camps were established also at Forest Experiment Stations. This policy of sending conscientious objectors to camps continued until the Government was up against a manpower shortage.<sup>4</sup>

For a little more than a year the administration of Alternative Service Camps was under the Department of National War Services, which handled the matter through the Department of Mines and Resources. It was also through the Minister of Mines and Resources, the Honorable T. A. Crerar, that the Federal Government entered into an agreement with the Province of British Columbia in the spring of 1942.<sup>5</sup> No important policy changes took place until the fall of 1942, when the administration of the National War Services Regulations was transferred to the Department of Labour. For convenience, policy development under the National Selective Service Mobilization Regulations, will be discussed first, and then the changes effected under National Selective Service Civilian Regulations will be dealt with. After this discussion of general policy several specific aspects of policy will be taken up as well as the administrative structure of Alternative Service. In the last section an attempt will be made to analyze the nature of the policy of "demobilization".

## **I. POLICY UNDER NATIONAL SELECTIVE SERVICE REGULATIONS**

Under Order-in-Council P.C. 8800, September 26th, 1942, the administration of the National War Services Regulations 1940 (Recruits) was transferred from the Minister of National War Services to the Minister of Labour. This transfer was made in order to achieve "the most effective use of manpower in the war effort"<sup>6</sup> and such an objective could only be realized by a coordination and control of labor and the calling up of men for military training.

To conform to the change in administration Order-in-Council P.C. 10924 was issued on December 1st, 1942, revoking National War Ser-

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<sup>3</sup> Although the writer visited nearly every A.S.W. camp in Alberta and British Columbia during the war, he never encountered a Doukhobor in any of these camps.

<sup>4</sup> From a Report to a meeting of A.S. Officers on May 22, 1944, in Calgary, Alberta. File No. 601.3:(12-2) S.S.D.

<sup>5</sup> cf. Letter of the Honorable T. A. Crerar to the Honorable A. Wells Gray, Minister of Lands, B.C. for reasons and basic philosophy of this arrangement. Appendix D.

<sup>6</sup> Order-in-Council P.C. 8800, September 26th, 1942.

vices Regulations 1940 (Recruits) and substituting, therefore, National Selective Service Mobilization Regulations. This Order-in-Council (P.C. 10924) incorporates the basic principles of the Government for Alternative Service during World War II and although it was later amended, the general policy remained practically unchanged.

The terms under which Alternative Service was to be performed by postponed conscientious objectors are clearly outlined in subsections 1 - 12 of Section 14 of P.C. 10924. A brief summary of these terms and conditions might be in place at this point.

(1) The Mobilization Board is authorized to order a postponed conscientious objector to report to such person as the Minister might prescribe to carry out alternative service for the duration of the war unless it were established to the satisfaction of the Registrar that such person was not fit to perform alternative service.

(2) The Registrar of the Mobilization Board is authorized to serve a postponed conscientious objector with an order to report in accordance with such order of the Board or the Minister as might be provided for therein.

(3) The person who is served with such an order is under obligation to comply, and must live in such place, under such circumstances, and perform such alternative service as might be prescribed by the Board or the Minister.

(4) The person performing alternative service in an A.S.W. Camp is to receive 50 cents per day. A man appointed as subforeman may be paid 75 cents, and a man appointed foreman one dollar per day. Clothing is not provided.

(5) The Minister is authorized to make arrangements with any Department of the Government of Canada or enter into an agreement with the government of any province for the organization and operation of places where persons might be required to report and to perform alternative service.

Such an agreement could provide for:

(a) Payment or reimbursement for all or any part of the cost of operating such places;

(b) The employment of necessary officers and employees;

(c) The nature of the alternative service to be carried out and the conditions under which it is to be carried out;

(d) The living conditions to prevail in such places;

(e) The medical protection to be provided for persons required to attend such places;

(6) Persons in charge of such places are authorized to direct and delegate to others authority to direct those persons performing alternative service;

(7) The Minister is authorized to prescribe rules for the regulations of any place to which persons are required to report as well as for the conduct of the persons performing;

(8) Provision is made for leave of absence and penalty for failure to return at the expiration of such period of leave;

(9) Provision is made for penalties for violation of the regulations;

(10) Following the conviction of an offence by a postponed conscientious objector provision is made for his being taken by police escort, on expiration of this term of imprisonment, to a specified place to perform alternative service;

(11) During the time a man is performing alternative service he is entitled to receive benefits under the Government Employees' Compensation Act, as though he were an 'employee' as defined by that Act, and the Minister, with the concurrence of the Minister of Transport, may prescribe the remuneration a man shall be deemed to have received for the purpose of such Act;

(12) The Crown is not liable in respect of any claim arising out of the disability, illness, or death of any person ordered to report to perform alternative service.<sup>7</sup>

The above regulations remained in effect, with slight modifications, for the duration of the War for those men who worked in Alternative Service Camps. Postponed conscientious objectors who were later directed to essential work in agriculture or industry entered into special agreements with their respective employers and new regulations were provided for them by the Alternative Service Branch of the Department of Labour. The direction of postponed conscientious objectors continued under the National Selective Service Mobilization Section without any material change in procedure until May, 1943. Men who were called up for alternative service were assigned to work in camps either in the National Parks or in the British Columbia Forestry Service. A significant change was made, when under the authority of Order-in-Council P.C. 2821, April 7th, 1943, (amending P.C. 10924), the responsibility for the direction of persons to Alternative Service in camps, or the direction of such persons to employment or industry, was vested in the Employment Service operated under the National Selective Service Civilian Regulations. Increasing pressure from representatives of agriculture and industry, who insisted that the services of conscientious objectors should be made available for work of "national importance", henceforth had a determining influence on Government policy.

## **II. POLICY UNDER NATIONAL SELECTIVE SERVICE CIVILIAN REGULATIONS**

Under the new regulations, which became effective on May 1st, 1943, administrative changes were introduced which had important and far-reaching consequences for the A.S.W. program. A "Chief Alternative Service Officer" was appointed by the Minister to assume direc-

<sup>7</sup> cf. Order in Council, P.C. 10924, Section 14, Subsections 1 - 12.

tion of this new branch of the Employment Service. Mr. L. E. Westman, a man with outstanding administrative abilities, rendered valuable services in this capacity. Alternative Service Officers were also named for the following Mobilization Divisions in which a considerable number of conscientious objectors had to be directed to Alternative Service projects: Mobilization Division "A", London, Mobilization Division "B", Toronto, Mobilization Division "J", Winnipeg, Mobilization Division "M", Regina, Mobilization Division "N", Edmonton, and Mobilization Division "K" Vancouver. The Alternative Service officers in the other divisions were members of the staff of the Employment Service and the Unemployment Insurance Branch, since only a small part of their time had to be devoted to alternative service matters.

Up to this time postponed conscientious objectors had been employed chiefly in the National Parks and in fire-prevention work in British Columbia. The new regulations also provided for a change in this respect. In addition to effecting the transfer of direction from the *Mobilization Section* of National Selective Service to the *Civilian Section*, P.C. 2821 broke new ground in the use of Alternative Service men by providing that such persons would also be "available for work in agriculture and industry under conditions which provide for uniform treatment of such persons and at the same time will not induce applications for postponement on grounds of conscientious objection."<sup>8</sup> Prior to this date, a farm leave for a stated period, as recommended by the Registrar of the Mobilization Board to the Camp Superintendent, was the only basis, aside from compassionate leave, on which an alternative service worker could be released for work outside the camp.

Under P.C. 2821, Alternative Service Officers were authorized to direct postponed conscientious objectors to employment in agriculture and other essential industries. It might be profitable at this point to analyze the methods of procedure of these officers in carrying out their new assignment.

### **1. Procedure of A.S. Officers in directing men to essential employment.<sup>9</sup>**

Immediately after May 1st, 1943, the Alternative Service Officer in each Mobilization District went to the Registrar of the Mobilization Board and extracted from the Registrar's files of individual postponed conscientious objectors all relevant data in regard to each man. Important for their work were such things as the date on which he was given his C.O. status, the information appearing on his registration card, a summary of his case history since becoming subject to Alternative Service, his job qualifications, etc. It was also important for the A.S. Officer to know, whether the postponed conscientious objector was then in an A.S.W. camp, on a farm leave, or whether he had not yet been directed to any Alternative Service.

<sup>8</sup> Order-in-Council P.C. 2821, April 7, 1943, p. 1.

<sup>9</sup> Cf. Historical Account, *op. cit.*, pp. 12, 13.

The resume of this information constituted the basis of individual files that A.S. Officers now proceeded to set up in their own headquarters. In the meantime, each conscientious objector was notified that in the future he would be under the jurisdiction of a named A.S. Officer in his Division. After May 1st, 1943, when a man appeared before his Mobilization Board and was given the status of a postponed conscientious objector, he was forthwith referred to the Divisional A.S. Officer.

The first task of the newly appointed A.S. Officers was to find Alternative Service for several hundred men, who had been given the status of a postponed conscientious objector, but who could not any more be absorbed by the A.S.W. camp system, and for whom there had been no legislative provision to be directed to other employment. These men were now called for interviews by A.S. Officers. If a man was already engaged in work of an essential nature in either agriculture or industry, he was permitted to remain in that employment, if he agreed to accept a contract, by which part of his earnings would be diverted to the Canadian Red Cross Society. If he was not willing to comply with these conditions, he was ordered to perform Alternative Service in one of the Camps. Those conscientious objectors who were not employed in essential occupations were directed to essential employment in keeping with their training and qualifications, but with their earnings subject to the Red Cross deductions as referred to above.

The second major task of these Divisional A.S. Officers was to examine the employment background of those men who were in A.S.W. camps. This was accomplished by an examination of the files received from the Registrar's Office as well as by personal interviews with the men in the camps. A camp replacement program was introduced presently, whereby those men, who had been in an A.S.W. camp for more than a year, and who had a useful background in either agriculture or industry, and who were willing to comply with the regulations applying to Alternative Service men outside the camps, were withdrawn from camps and placed in appropriate employment. Their places in camp were filled by men who had not previously performed Alternative Service in A.S.W. Camps, and who, in addition, lacked the proper qualifications for employment in either agriculture or industry, or who were not urgently required on the jobs in which they were engaged at the time.

Since many of the men in A.S.W. camps had a background of experience that made their service particularly desirable to farm owners and operators the year round, large numbers of A.S. workers were withdrawn from the camps and placed on farms. A smaller number was placed in essential industries. This new "agricultural policy" of the Alternative Service Branch of the Department of Labour became a rather controversial issue both in Parliament and among certain organizations during the next few years. It might be profitable to examine the reasons for this new policy as well as the reaction to it by certain officials and organizations.



## 2. Reasons for the new "Agricultural Policy"

By the spring of 1943, Canada experienced an increasing shortage of labor, especially in agriculture. Members of Parliament from the prairie provinces appealed to the Minister of Labour again and again to solve this problem at least in part by releasing conscientious objectors from the camps for work on farms. On May 14th, 1943, John G. Diefenbaker, M.P. (Lake Centre, Saskatchewan), directed this question to the Honorable Humphry Mitchel, Minister of Labour: "What is being done, and what success has been attained in securing the services of conscientious objectors and others subject to alternative service to go to farms at this time to assist in the spring work?"<sup>10</sup>

The Minister replied by reference to the recent Order-in-Council, P.C. 2821, which provided for the direction of Alternative Service workers to farms and essential industries. Later in the same year, on July 16th, 1943, Mr. Diefenbaker criticized Government policy with respect to Alternative Service and protested in Parliament against the spending of public funds for Alternative Service camps in National Parks. In Mr. Diefenbaker's opinion this was an unnecessary and unjustifiable expense in view of the fact that all these men could be profitably employed on farms, where there existed a short-labor supply.<sup>11</sup>

Similar views to those expressed above found embodiment in numerous petitions of farm groups and organizations. In the prairie provinces there was a general feeling that British Columbia was profiting through the services of conscientious objectors at the expense of the prairie farmers. This discontent also found expression on an official level in a letter written by O. S. Longman, Deputy Minister of Agriculture of Alberta, to Arthur MacNamara, Deputy Minister of Labour, Ottawa. In this letter, dated January 7th, 1944, Mr. Longman, presents the following unsatisfactory situation:

It has been brought to the attention of this office that a number of Alberta residents declared conscientious objectors and placed in a camp at G.T. 3, Vedder Crossing, British Columbia, are being contracted to do farm work" . . . "Our understanding was that conscientious objectors from Alberta were contracted to British Columbia Forestry Division for the purpose of forest fire protection, and that, therefore, they could not be released to return to Alberta farms.

Mr. Longman closes his letter with this appeal:

May we point out that due to war and industrial activities, draining so many men from Alberta farms, that you permit conscientious objectors to be returned to this province to serve in the capacity of farm workers. We have now reached a point where unless every directive measure is taken there will not be sufficient farm help to maintain present production levels.<sup>12</sup>

<sup>10</sup> Debates (H.C.) 1943, Vol. III, p. 2675.

<sup>11</sup> Debates (H.C.) 1943, Vol. V., p. 4960.

<sup>12</sup> Letter: Longman to MacNamara, Correspondence re: Alternative Service, File No. 601.3:(12) S.S.D.

It was mounting pressure of this type which compelled the Government to change its policy. When L. E. Westman reviewed Alternative Service policy at the Conference of A.S. officers on May 22nd, 1944, in Calgary, Alberta he pointed out that the closing of the British Columbia Forestry camps and the release of some men from camps in the National Parks of Alberta was motivated primarily by the need for agricultural workers. Since most of these men came from agriculture this procedure was altogether proper and logical. The agricultural commitments by the Government fully warranted the return of these men. This policy, according to Mr. Westman, was not put into effect to please the farmers only, but because the Allies looked to Canada for both agricultural and non-agricultural production. As a by-product of that situation it was necessary to return as many conscientious objectors as possible from the camps to the farms. Canada's commitments had almost completely exhausted the nation's manpower supply. These were the compelling arguments behind the decision to withdraw the men from the camps and direct them to more essential employment.<sup>13</sup> Let us now examine briefly several reactions to this policy.

### 3. Reactions to the new "Agricultural Policy"

When in the late months of 1943 the Alternative Service Branch of the Department of Labour had decided in principle to allocate postponed conscientious objectors to agriculture and essential industry it informed the Honorable Minister of Lands of the Province of British Columbia, that the existing contract would not be renewed after its expiration on March 31st, 1944. This was bad news for the British Columbia Government and caused strong resentment among the officials of the B.C. Forestry Service.

The concern of the B.C. Government at the prospect of losing a large group of Alternative Service workers was expressed in a letter of A. Wells Gray, Minister of Lands to the Deputy Minister of Labour, Mr. A. MacNamara. The B.C. Minister reminds Mr. MacNamara of the difficulty in securing properly qualified men for the task of fire-prevention: "Our need is for men", Mr. Gray writes, "well able to stand the arduous and gruelling work of fire-fighting. The Alternative Service workers are quite satisfactory in that regard; and the organization for handling them is set up."<sup>14</sup>

In the same letter Mr. Gray refers to the excellent record of these men in their fire-prevention work in 1942, when "Alternative Service workers fought 145 fires without allowing one to escape."<sup>15</sup> He also emphasizes the importance of the camp in wood fuel production and that this continued operation is in the national interest.

The threat of a Japanese invasion, however, was past by this time and the Government did not re-consider its decision to let the contract with the B.C. Forestry Service expire on March 31st, 1944.

<sup>13</sup> cf. Minutes of Meeting, Alternative Service Reports, S.S.D.

<sup>14</sup> Letter of A. Wells Gray to A. MacNamara, January 11th, 1944.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*

Criticism of the new policy came from different provinces on different grounds. In Saskatchewan the organization of the Imperial Order Daughters of the Empire was highly displeased and irritated because of the agricultural postponements granted by the local Mobilization Board. Although conscientious objectors are not specifically mentioned in the following letter, they undoubtedly formed part of the group about whom complaints are made. In a letter to the Honorable Humphrey Mitchell, Minister of Labour, the provincial secretary of I.O.D.E., expresses her indignation over improper decisions of the Saskatchewan Mobilization Board.

We have reviewed with the Canadian Legion of the B.E.S.L., Saskatchewan Command, many cases of men improperly granted postponement and the actual evidence can be produced at any time. These men are not farmers, nor are they in essential industry, in our opinion. Women with sons in the services should not be expected to be satisfied with a Board composed of members who haven't sons in service.<sup>16</sup>

In his reply Mr. Mitchell very tactfully pointed out that it is a rather difficult matter to deal with complaints which are based on generalities of this nature, and that on the other hand the majority of the complaints in connection with the operation of the Mobilization Board in Saskatchewan have been that too many men had been called who were farmers. Such exactly opposite views coming from the same province indicate, according to Mr. Mitchell, "just how difficult is the matter of holding the balance."<sup>17</sup>

A thorough examination of the relevant documents and of many private letters of Government officials provides ample proof that the Department of Labour was doing an excellent job of "holding the balance" in its Alternative Service policy. According to L. E. Westman, Chief Alternative Service Officer, two main objectives were set in the development of this policy: (1) a conscientious objector must be doing highly essential work; (2) the camp system should be restricted in general to men who refused to accept other essential work in accordance with regulations.<sup>18</sup>

Table V shows the concrete results of this policy at the end of the war. It will be observed at once, that almost two-thirds of all postponed conscientious objectors were employed in agriculture as of December 31st, 1945. Less than two per cent were still employed in camps. These, as indicated above, were almost without exception conscientious objectors who did not comply with the new regulations directing men to essential employment.

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<sup>16</sup> Smith, Mrs. C. H., Letter of January 21st, 1944. File No. 601.3: (12) S.S.D.

<sup>17</sup> Mitchell, H., Letter of February 10th, 1944.

<sup>18</sup> Westman, L. E., Report. *Op. cit.*

TABLE V

Number and Disposition of postponed Conscientious Objectors  
as of December 31st, 1945

Total referrals from Mobilization Boards since the commencement of Alternative Service Regulations .....	12,600
Deduct inter-office transfers .....	433
	<hr/> 12,167

541 of the above number subsequently offered their services to the Armed forces and were accepted as combatant soldiers or Air Force Personnel.

227 subsequently offered their services as non-combatant soldiers and were accepted into the medical and dental Corps.

500 had their status as conscientious objectors revoked by their Mobilization Boards.

48 died .

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1316

So that on December 31st, 1945, there were 12,167, less 1,316, or 10,851 persons in Canada holding the status of postponed conscientious objectors.

Disposition of these 10,851 postponed Conscientious Objectors

6,655 were employed in agriculture (including men on leave from  
A.S.W. Camps)

1,412 were employed in miscellaneous essential industries

542 were employed in sawmills, logging and timbering

469 were employed in packing plants and food processing plants

269 were employed in construction

86 were employed in hospitals

63 were employed in coal mining

15 were employed in grain handling at the Head of the Lakes

170 were employed in Alternative Service Work Camps

14 were serving jail sentences

34 were in hands of or being prepared for Enforcement Division

201 were in hands of R.C.M.P. or other agencies to locate present  
whereabouts

921 were under review

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10,851

*Note:* the above figures relate to disposition of these men as to employment, irrespective as to whether Red Cross payments are or are not required.

### III. POLICY WITH RESPECT TO PAY AND GENERAL WELFARE

The Government policy in regard to *financial remuneration* for Alternative Service work reflects the fact that the whole question of pay for conscientious objectors was a rather delicate issue. When in the summer of 1945 a raise in wages was announced for postponed conscientious objectors employed on farms, there was an immediate reaction of the Canadian Legion on the West Coast. Under the caption "Legion Protests Conchy Pay Boost" the Vancouver Sun published an article which stated that the "Legion was protesting the Government's action on the ground that there was absolutely no justification for the conscientious objectors to benefit financially while refusing to fight for their country."<sup>19</sup>

Consideration will be given in the next chapter to the question of wages paid to conscientious objectors in agriculture and industry, hence the writer shall confine himself to a brief discussion of wages and compensation for men in A.S.W. camps. Order-in-Council P.C. 2821, of April 7th, 1943, stated specifically that

The Minister shall pay not less than fifty cents per day to every person performing alternative service under this section and may pay not more than seventy-five cents per day to any such person who has been appointed a sub-foreman and not more than one dollar per day to any such person who has been appointed a foreman; but no such man shall be provided with clothing at public expense.<sup>20</sup>

It will be obvious that in determining these rates of pay officials were guided by the principle expressed by representatives of the Canadian Legion, that conscientious objectors should not benefit financially as a result of their refusal to join the armed forces. In addition to this wage of fifty cents per day, Alternative Service men were, of course, provided with board and lodging. Since there was no provision made in this wage scale for married men with dependents, the low rate of pay brought real hardships to some families of married Alternative Service men. This situation was later remedied, with certain exceptions.

A very important matter for men engaged in such hazardous and dangerous work as snag-falling and fire-fighting, was the provision of compensation. While working in A.S.W. camps, a man was "entitled to receive benefits under the Government Employee Compensation Act, as though he were an 'employee' as defined by that Act."<sup>21</sup>

Fairly adequate *medical services* were provided for men in Alternative Service camps.<sup>22</sup> The agreements entered into between the

<sup>19</sup> cf. Vancouver Sun, July 5, 1945, p.10.

<sup>20</sup> Order-in-Council P.C. 2821, Section 251 (3).

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, Section 251 (10).

<sup>22</sup> For detailed directives in respect to medical services in A.S.W. camps see Manual of Instruction in the Management of A.S.W. Camps", 1944. chapters 7 and 8.

Minister of Mines and Resources and the Minister of Lands for the Province of British Columbia provided that Alternative Service workers should be given adequate medical care. Medical officers of A.S.W. camps were paid a monthly fee, the amount of which varied according to local conditions and responsibilities, as authorized by the Director of Medical Services, Department of Pensions and National Health, Ottawa. It was the prescribed duty of these medical officers to visit each camp at least once a month, examining each worker and inspecting sanitary conditions in the camps. They also assumed responsibility for the medical care of men in hospital, as well as for those who were sent to their offices for diagnosis and treatment. If, in the opinion of the medical officer, a man was deemed to be permanently incapacitated for Alternative Service by reason of his physical or mental conditions, it was his duty to notify the superintendent of the camp immediately who in turn would notify the Divisional Alternative Service Officer for a decision regarding the discharge of such worker. Men requiring dental treatment, were on the advice of the medical officer, taken to the nearest dentist for treatment. Similar regulations were also in effect for the examination of eyes or the provision of glasses. Thus it will be seen that the health of Alternative Service workers was adequately protected.

A brief reference to the policy of the Alternative Service Branch on "compassionate cases" may be appropriate here. Alternative Service Officers as a rule acted on the principle that the intent of the legislation affecting conscientious objectors was not to impose any undue hardship on these men or their dependents. These officers were given full discretionary powers in connection with the action to be taken when it was apparent to them that the literal application of the regulations would result in suffering for the dependents of the conscientious objector. This just and humane treatment of compassionate cases was largely responsible for the continued and whole-hearted cooperation of at least ninety-five per cent of all postponed conscientious objectors throughout the entire period of Alternative Service.

Reference has already been made to Order-in-Council P.C. 2821, which contained the definite stipulation that "no such man shall be provided with *clothing* at public expense." The wear and tear of such work as snag-falling, road-construction, etc., in the National Parks, as well as in the B.C. Forestry camps made proper clothing and footwear a real problem. The small monthly allowance of fifteen dollars was hardly sufficient to provide for these and other necessities. This situation was remedied by Order-in-Council P.C. 8212, issued on October 24th, 1944. This Order-in-Council omits the clause to which reference has just been made.

Under the revised "Rules and Regulations" for the guidance of Superintendents of Alternative Service Work Camps, the following articles of clothing were provided if needed, either upon arrival at camp or later as replacement:<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>23</sup> Rules and Regulations (revised) July 20, 1944, p. 7.

1. Work boots — leather
2. Gummed Rubber boots
3. Pants — work
4. Shirts — work (2)
5. Underwear — winter (2 suits)
6. Mackinaw
7. Mitts — leather
8. Mitts — woollen
9. Cap — winter
10. Socks — two pair
11. Windbreaker
12. Cardigan

This clothing was provided on the basis of need from the standpoint of work to be done under the conditions prevailing, and from the standpoint of safeguarding the worker's health. For the men who spent several years in forestry camps this provision meant a real saving and it gave them better protection against weather hazards.

One of the most serious problems for Alternative Service men who were married was the *maintenance of dependents*. Until March 20th, 1944, no legislative provision had been made for the maintenance of dependents of postponed conscientious objectors. In most cases where a real need existed, the local church came to the aid of such families. In all Mennonite communities at least, this was the general practice. Because of the small wage paid to Alternative Service workers, the problem of proper provision for dependents was a constant concern of pastors and leaders in Mennonite Churches. Married conscientious objectors who were not affiliated with any of the Historic Peace Groups, found it even more difficult to provide for their dependents. By Order-in-Council P.C. 1977, on March 20th, 1944, the Government attempted to meet this need. The Minister of Labour was authorized to

re-imburse any province or municipality for amounts disbursed by the province or municipality for the maintenance of any person to whom this part applies during the time such person is performing alternative service or is employed under this part.<sup>24</sup>

According to the Chief Alternative Service Officer, fewer than 25 of the men in camps, and no persons employed in industry, agriculture, etc., applied for such relief.<sup>25</sup> The cost resulting from the provision, therefore, was negligible. Another very important provision of this Order-in-Council was an authorization for allowances for the maintenance of dependents of conscientious objectors in respect to hospital, dental or medical service costs, to be paid to them out of that part of their earnings destined for the Red Cross.

<sup>24</sup> Order-in-Council P.C. 1977, Section 253 (amended) Subsection 5.

<sup>25</sup> cf. Historical Account, *op. cit.* p. 4.

#### IV. ORGANIZATION AND ADMINISTRATION OF THE A.S.W. CAMP SYSTEM

With the creation of a separate Alternative Service Branch in the Department of Labour in the spring of 1944, the long experimental stage came to an end and a satisfactory pattern for the administration of Alternative Service camps had been evolved. The need for a separate branch to deal with the numerous and often perplexing problems arising out of the A.S.W. camp system, had long been felt. The position of conscientious objectors under individual contract on farms and in industry also demanded considerable administrative attention. Already on September 13th, 1943, J. C. Rutledge of the Unemployment Insurance Commission submitted a memorandum to the Deputy Minister of Labour. Mr. A. MacNamara, in which he presented the following considerations favoring the creation of a separate Alternative Service Branch.<sup>26</sup>

1. The Employment Service, as presently constituted by its speedy growth to great proportions, is inevitably cumbersome. The absorption of this work (alternative service) within the framework of employment service, would simply add to this problem.
2. From an administrative viewpoint speedier results could be obtained were Alternative Service to be treated independently.
3. The program could be more easily controlled independently.
4. The program deals with a special problem. To treat it independently would result in great concentration of effort and more easily controlled staff instruction methods.
5. To absorb the Alternative Service operations in Employment Service would mean that the operating men would have to work through men at a higher level who might lack a thorough understanding of the problems involved.

Mr. Rutledge sums up his arguments for a separate Alternative Service Branch with these words: "I favor an independent organization, essentially because it would be speedier, less cumbersome, more easily controlled."<sup>27</sup>

On April 1st, 1944, the Minister of Labour approved the creation of a separate Alternative Service Branch. Under the changed arrangement, the Chief Alternative Service Officer was responsible for Alternative Service operations directly to the Deputy Minister. This was an important administrative change and according to J. F. MacKinnon, resulted in an immediate improvement in the efficiency of Alternative Service operations.<sup>28</sup>

The distribution of administrative responsibility for various phases of Alternative Service operations is now presented in outline form.

<sup>26</sup> cf. Memorandum, File No. 601.3 (12.2), S.S.D.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>28</sup> Historical Account, *op. cit.*, p. 5.



1. The Minister of Labour outlined the general policy for the operation of A.S.W. Camps and the Minister of Mines and Resources exercised control as regards application thereof to the National Parks and Forest Experiment Stations.

2. The Director of the Lands, Parks and Forest Branch was responsible for making suitable arrangements giving effect to such policies as were introduced from time to time.

3. The Chief Alternative Service Officer was responsible for giving effect to policies as regards disposition of Alternative Service workers as were authorized by the Minister of Labour.

4. The Controller of the National Parks Bureau and the Dominion Forester provided for the establishment of camps on the National Parks and Forest Experiment Stations and issued instructions for the operation of such Camps within their respective jurisdictions.

5. Divisional Alternative Service Officers directed men to the camps and arranged for their transportation to the place to which they were directed to report and similarly for their removal or discharge from such camps.

6. The Superintendent of the Park or Forest Experiment Station had charge of the operation of the camps under his jurisdiction. The Superintendent was also responsible for the care and custody of the men and for the work as authorized.

7. The general foreman, subforemen, clerks and other personnel had the powers delegated to them by the Superintendent.

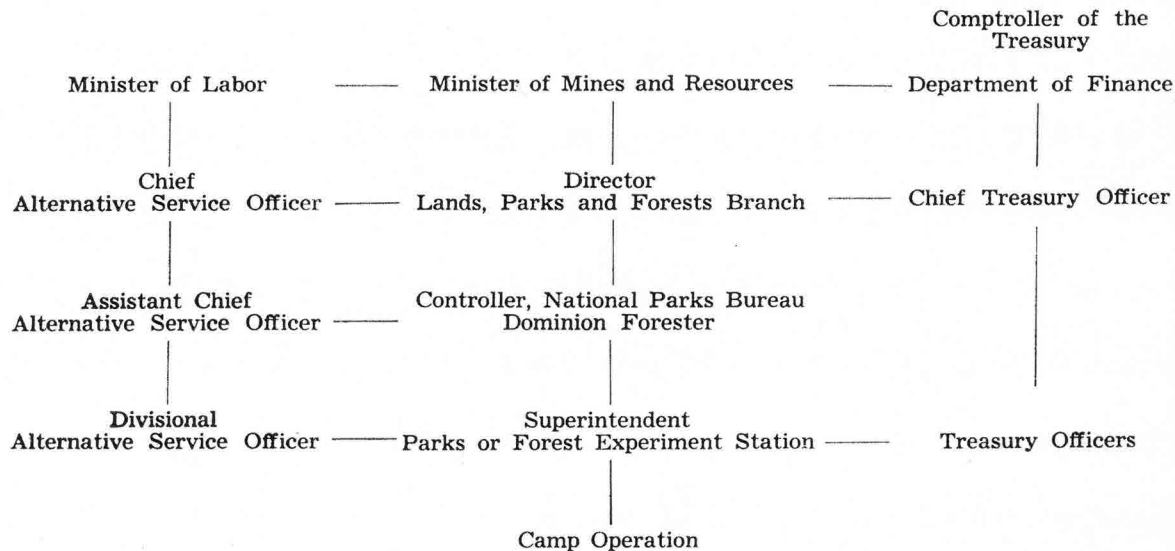
8. Accounting procedure was in accordance with and subject to the provisions of the Consolidated Revenue and Audit Act as amended, 1931, and Regulations thereunder.<sup>29</sup>

The chart on page 67 shows the lines of authority and inter-departmental cooperation.

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<sup>29</sup> cf. Manual of Instruction, *op. cit.*

**LINES OF AUTHORITY AND INTERDEPARTMENTAL COOPERATION  
IN HANDLING ALTERNATIVE SERVICE WORKERS IN CAMP ESTABLISHMENTS**



## V. POLICY WITH RESPECT TO NON-COMBATANT SERVICE IN THE ROYAL CANADIAN ARMY MEDICAL CORPS

It will be recalled that in their earliest contacts with the Department of National War Services Mennonite leaders, especially of the Russländer group, offered the services of their young men for the Medical Corps. Reference to this fact was made by Mr. Gardiner,<sup>30</sup> Minister of National War Services, in the House of Commons on March 14th, 1941. The idea of having non-combatant units in the regular Canadian Army apparently did not meet with the approval of the officials in the Department of National Defence. From a statement made in the House of Commons on April 28th, 1942, by the Honorable J. R. Ralston, Minister of National Defence, it is obvious that the Minister was at the time opposed to a "Non-combatant Medical Corps" which would provide for the enlistment of conscientious objectors. In his statement Mr. Ralston declared,

I have taken the position, rightly or wrongly, that the men who serve in the armed forces must be in a position to take on whatever is necessary in the army. I do not want a distinction made between the duties which men may be called upon to perform . . . To make any distinction of the kind in a unit I do not think is for the good of the unit itself, so I would hesitate to have men in the unit, who could not be called upon to do combatant service.<sup>31</sup>

As the war continued and recruitment for the army became more and more difficult as a result of an acute manpower shortage in the country, the Government changed its policy with regard to non-combatant service of postponed conscientious objectors. By Order-in-Council P.C. 7251 on September 16th, 1943, provision was made for such service because "there are in Canada certain persons who are conscientiously opposed by reason of their religious training and beliefs to the bearing of arms, but who are anxious to serve in the Armed Forces in a non-combatant capacity."<sup>32</sup>

This last clause appears to be a contradiction of the views expressed earlier by representatives of the Historical Peace Churches in their consultation with the Minister of National War services, when they had insisted that such service should be under *civilian* administration. When Mr. Walter Tucker, M.P. spoke on November 25th, 1940, of the readiness of the Mennonites, Quakers, and Tunkers, to serve their country, he mentioned their willingness to save life and "help the wounded" but he also added that they had asked, "that these operations should be under civilian auspices."<sup>33</sup>

<sup>30</sup> Debates (H.C.) 1941, Vol. II, p.1552.

<sup>31</sup> Debates (H.C.) 1942, Vol. II, p. 1967.

<sup>32</sup> Preamble, Order-in-Council P.C. 7251, September 16, 1943.

<sup>33</sup> Debates (H.C.) 1941, Vol. I, p. 383.

Since this Order-in-Council marks a significant change in the policy of the Canadian Government with regard to the utilization of the services of postponed conscientious objectors, its four main provisions are given here:

1. Any person who has been found by a Mobilization Board established under the National Selective Service Mobilization Regulations within one month of his application for enlistment to be a member of the denomination of Christians called Mennonites or a member of the Community of Doukhobors, as such members are defined in the said Regulations, or to conscientiously object by reason of religious training and belief to war in any form and to participation in combatant military service in which he might be required to take human life, may, for the purpose of performing any non-combatant service or duty with the Royal Canadian Army Medical Corps or the Canadian Dental Corps, be enlisted into an Active Unit or Formation of the Canadian Army.

2. Such person shall be subject to military law and shall have all of the rights and privileges and be subject to all of the obligations and duties of a soldier serving on active service with any unit or formation of the Canadian Army except that he shall not be required under any circumstances to bear arms.

3. Should such person desire to assume combatant duties, he shall be permitted so to do at any time.

4. The Minister of National Defence may make such regulations and issue such instructions as he may consider necessary or desirable for carrying out the purpose and intent of this Order.<sup>34</sup>

Several observations on these provisions might help to explain why only a relatively small number of conscientious objectors enlisted for this non-combatant service in the Canadian Army. The Order-in-Council makes no provision for a "Medical Corps" under civilian auspices such as the Quakers of England and America had organized during World War I.<sup>35</sup> Their "Ambulance Unit" was noted for its excellent record in caring for the wounded and dying on the battlefields of Europe. Objection to service even under military command would not have been nearly as strong if provision had been made by the Order for separate non-combatant units either in the Medical Corps or in the Dental Corps. Such a concession had been made to the Mennonites in Russia during World War I. A primary concern of Mennonite leaders in connection with any form of Alternative Service was whether or not it provided for the opportunity of religious supervision and instruction. The stipulation that men desiring to perform non-combatant duty "be enlisted into an Active Unit or Formation of the Canadian Army"<sup>36</sup> made such supervision obviously impossible. Those conscientious ob-

<sup>34</sup> Order-in-Council re enlistment for non-combatant service of "conscientious objectors". September 16, 1943.

<sup>35</sup> Dorland, *op. cit.*, p. 325.

<sup>36</sup> Order-in-Council P.C. 7251, *loc. cit.*

jectors who enlisted under this Order were to all intents and purposes classified as soldiers with the one reservation that under no circumstances were they to be required to bear arms.

The number responding to this new opportunity and the nature of their service will be discussed briefly in Chapter V.

## **VI. POLICY IN THE "DEMOBILIZATION" OF ALTERNATIVE SERVICE MEN**

Although the war in Europe came to an end with the capitulation of Germany on May 7th, 1945, and the Japanese surrendered to the Allies on August 14th of the same year, Alternative Service men were not completely demobilized until August 15th, 1946. The problem of the demobilization of postponed conscientious objectors was full of political implications and had to be handled with extreme caution. In releasing wartime controls for Alternative Service men it was not primarily a question of what would be most economical but rather what would be most expedient politically.

When in the spring of 1945 it was becoming increasingly obvious, that the surrender of the German Armies was only a matter of a few months, the issue became a very practical one for officials in the Department of Labour. L. E. Westman apparently favored a quick demobilization. In a letter dated April 14th, 1945, to the Divisional A.S. Officer at Vancouver he refers to two schools of thought on this question. The one school of thought 'would abolish Mobilization Boards at once and holding N.R.M.A. soldiers for some time without calling up any more.' Others again "lean to the view that these men (conscientious objectors) should be held rather indefinitely until all General Service men are home."<sup>37</sup>

Mr. Westman's chief argument against continuing the operations of N.R.M.A. is its tremendous operating cost. "It costs about a billion a year to keep N.R.M.A. running," Mr Westman writes, "it might be easier to let these fellows go to work, establishing the theory, that there is going to be work for everybody, and give the returned men the billion."<sup>38</sup>

That such a theory of "work for everybody" could be established was not at all certain, however, and Government leaders were very sensitive to the agitation of various pressure groups who strongly advocated a continuation of strict controls for conscientious objectors in Alternative Service. On the other hand it must also be emphasized here, that Mennonite leaders representing the Historic Peace Churches were in full agreement with a more gradual demobilization policy. This is evident from a memorandum which they submitted to L. E. Westman, Chief A.S. Officer, at the special request of the latter, shortly after the cessa-

<sup>37</sup> Letter, Westman to C. S. Henley, File No. 601.3:(12) S.S.D.

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*

tion of hostilities in Europe. The following six recommendations are embodied in this document:

1. It is our opinion, that the programme should be gradually brought to an end, rather than a sudden cessation.
2. In order that the number of conscientious objectors called into Alternative Service be decreased, rather than be increased, we suggest farm postponements similar to the Army and in case of industry, a postponement on medical basis.
3. We suggest that all married men under contract with one child or more will have their contracts cancelled and that this shall apply also to such as may have this status in the future.
4. We suggest that all married men without children pay a token payment of five dollars to the Red Cross.
5. We suggest that all single conscientious objectors under contract, both in agriculture or in industry, will have their payments reduced by one-half, and that first consideration be given to the boys who served in the Alternative Service Camps on the basis of length of service, etc.
6. That the regulations about buying or renting farms or going into business, be amended so that if it seems advisable from a social or economic standpoint to the Alternative Service Officer, and other parties concerned, permission may be granted.<sup>39</sup>

From the policy adopted by the Government in the next few months it appears that some of the suggestions made above did find a sympathetic hearing by Labour Department officials. Of much greater importance in the shaping of the Government's demobilization policy with regard to conscientious objectors than this memorandum by leaders of the Historic Peace Churches, however, were the reactions and recommendations of certain influential groups and officials. Fairly representative perhaps of the opinion of a large segment of the population of Canada is the sentiment expressed in the following letter, written by the Chairman of the Mobilization Board of Division "K" to A. MacNamara, Deputy Minister of Labor:

May I suggest that conscientious objectors be kept on the roll and the deductions be continued as long as our men are serving in the Armed Forces? One need scarcely argue in support of this suggestion. Alternative Service is service in lieu of service in the Armed Forces. Conscientious objectors have gotten off very, very lightly . . . Ninety per cent of the public will resent the relieving of conscientious objectors of further contributions until our boys who are serving are relieved from further service and return to their homes."<sup>40</sup>

The position of the Canadian Legion on this matter was also well-known to the Government. At various times during the last few months

<sup>39</sup> Letter Swalm to Westman, May 8th, 1945, Records of H.P.C.

<sup>40</sup> Letter, Manson to MacNamara, May 5, 1945. File No. 601.3:(12) S.S.D.

of the war this organization had expressed its views on this matter to the Government, making it very clear, that the Legion did not favor the demobilization of conscientious objectors until after the repatriation of the Armed Forces had been completed. When the Government announced that all labor controls should be terminated on September 17th, 1945, the Canadian Legion demanded that the "unfreezing" of labor should not apply to conscientious objectors.

Such reactions were partly motivated by the fear that conscientious objectors would receive employment positions which should be reserved for returned service men. In November, 1945, the "Citizens Rehabilitation Council of Greater Vancouver" passed a resolution which reflects this concern. The resolution reads:

That the Alternative Service Division of the Department of Labour be asked to remove all conscientious objectors from positions now held and these positions be made available to general service personnel requiring employment, it being recognized that general service men are to be given preference."<sup>41</sup>

Although in the view of Labour Department officials there were very few jobs held by conscientious objectors which would be acceptable to veterans, an investigation of the situation was ordered.<sup>42</sup>

In order to forestall any unfavorable political reactions the Cabinet decided in late November to continue the Alternative Service Regulations for the present. In a prepared press release on December 6th, 1945, Labour Minister Mitchell declared that "Canada's Selective Service Control, which absorbed conscientious objectors into agriculture and work camps during the war, will carry on throughout the winter."<sup>43</sup> In this announcement the Minister intimated that the revoking of these controls would in all probability be synchronized with the "anticipated betterment of employment conditions in the early spring."<sup>44</sup> The Minister also disclosed that approximately seventy per cent of the conscientious objectors in Canada were employed in agriculture, while about two hundred men who had refused to conform to the Regulations were still in A.S.W. camps. Of the remainder, those who were physically fit were employed on jobs that were not attractive to discharged service personnel.

Although Selective Service controls with reference to postponed conscientious objectors were not revoked in the spring of 1946, as predicted by the Minister of Labour, they did undergo certain changes, and there was a relaxation of controls for Alternative Service men under contract in agriculture.

On March 25th, 1946, Mr. Mitchell proposed certain changes in the Regulations governing conscientious objectors employed in agricul-

<sup>41</sup> Correspondence re Alternative Service, File No. 601.3., S.S.D.

<sup>42</sup> Letter, Mitchell to Citizens Rehabilitation Council of Greater Vancouver, November, 1945, File No. *Ibid.*

<sup>43</sup> Quotation from Kitchener Record, Dec. 6, 1945.

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*

ture. The Minister introduced these proposed changes with a few remarks reflecting the motivating factors behind Government policy at this time. Here are his words:

I do not intend, nor do I believe that the citizens of this country would agree, to release conscientious objectors from alternative service work until all enlisted men in the armed forces, or at least the majority of them, have been discharged. However, in view of the urgent need of increased agricultural production, it has been decided that some relaxation of the regulations should be affected which would encourage greater effort in agricultural production and to assist in furthering the supply of available agricultural labor.<sup>45</sup>

The changed regulations provided: (1) for elimination of Red Cross payments for those who continued in agricultural employment; (2) for the possibility of transfer of Alternative Service workers from camps to farms; and (3) for continued direction and supervision of all such men by the Alternative Service Branch of the Department of Labour.<sup>46</sup>

The uncertainty in the development of the demobilization policy with regard to postponed conscientious objectors created considerable restlessness among the men employed in various types of Alternative Service. In order to prevent any deterioration of the morale among A.S. men in his province, the Divisional A.S. Officer of British Columbia dispatched a memorandum to all postponed conscientious objectors as early as April, 1945. After calling the attention to the fact that a declaration of peace in Europe will not result in any relaxation of the Regulations governing Alternative Service workers, he concludes his circular letter with this exhortation:

This note is to impress upon you the necessity of staying on your jobs until the regulations are revoked, and also to ask your best efforts to assist in production to a greater degree than ever, if possible.

The work that the conscientious objectors have been doing in this province has been maintained on a very high standard, and it is hoped, that that standard will be maintained.<sup>47</sup>

Similar notes became necessary from time to time during the last year of Alternative Service, but by and large little difficulty was experienced by A.S. Officers in enforcing the Regulations.

Finally on July 23rd, 1946, Labour Minister Mitchell announced in the House of Commons, that control over conscientious objectors would end on August 15th.<sup>48</sup> On this date Order-in-Council 3030 became effective and all restrictions on employment of conscientious objectors ceased. By way of comparison it might be of interest to know that the

<sup>45</sup> Debates (H.C.) 1946. Vol. I. p. 213.

<sup>46</sup> cf. *Ibid*, p. 214.

<sup>47</sup> Memorandum, C. S. Henley to A.S. men, April 1945, File No. 60 - 1 - 14, S.S.D.

<sup>48</sup> Debates (H.C.) 1946, Vol. IV. p. 3722.



C.P.S. (Civilian Public Service) camps in the United States were finally closed only in March, 1947, more than six months after all Canadian C.O.'s were released.<sup>49</sup>

In closing this chapter on Government policy re Alternative Service it may be well to consider the fact that Canadian Government officials were not in the position to follow precedents in the nation's history, but had to blaze a new trail in developing Alternative Service Policy. Hence it was with a certain sense of satisfaction and pride that officials in the Department of Labour reviewed the unique developments and outstanding achievements of this policy at the close of the War. In a special press release on June 1st, 1945, Mr. Mitchell reviewed Government policy in dealing with conscientious objectors.

Canadian procedure, Mr. Mitchell stated, has been unique, and has been accepted in the United States and elsewhere as a very advanced way of handling the problem. Broadly speaking, the Canadian policy has been to place conscientious objectors in high priority work according to their ability, while at the same time deducting a portion of their earnings for the Red Cross. The workers themselves are pleased that their contributions are being thus allocated, and feel that they are participating more closely in the sacrifices of their fellow-Canadians in the front lines.<sup>50</sup>

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<sup>49</sup> cf. Melvin Gingerich, *Service for Peace*, Akron, Pennsylvania: The Mennonite Central Committee, 1949, p. 385.

<sup>50</sup> Press Release by Department of Labour, June 1, 1945. File No. 60 - 1 - 14. S.S.D.

## Chapter V

### GOVERNMENT PPROJECTS FOR ALTERNATIVE SERVICE

The gradual change in Government policy with regard to Alternative Service found practical expression in the type of work projects to which postponed conscientious objectors were assigned. Prior to the transfer of the administration of National War Service Regulations 1940 (Recruits) effective September 26th, 1942, from the Minister of National War Services to the Minister of Labour, Alternative Service consisted chiefly of work in the National Parks, and fire-prevention work in British Columbia by arrangements made with the Federal Department of Mines and Resources and the Department of Lands of British Columbia, respectively.

Upon transfer of the administration, new agreements were entered into between the Minister of Labour and the Minister of Mines and Resources, on the one hand, and the Minister of Lands for the Province of British Columbia on the other. As indicated previously, the transfer of control from the Mobilization Division to the Civilian Division of National Selective Service took place on April 7th, 1943.<sup>1</sup> This transfer brought a radical change in the policy and procedure of utilizing the services of postponed conscientious objectors. Emphasis was taken off the camp-system and every effort was made to use Alternative Service men on farms and in industry where their individual skills could be best utilized. Another type of Alternative Service was provided by Order-in-Council P.C. 7251 on September 16th, 1943, which permitted postponed conscientious objectors to enlist as noncombatants in the Royal Canadian Army Medical Corps or the Canadian Dental Corps.

For convenience the work of conscientious objectors in Alternative Service can be discussed under two main divisions: Alternative Service in Camps, and Alternative Service outside Camps.

#### I. ALTERNATIVE SERVICE IN CAMPS

In announcing the first call-up for Alternative Service on May 29th, 1941, Mr. Gardiner, Minister of National War Services, also indicated

that in the case of Mennonites and conscientious objectors an arrangement has been made with the federal Department of Mines and Resources to open camps in National Parks and a camp in

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<sup>1</sup> Cf. Order-in-Council P.C. 2821.

Ontario where Mennonites and conscientious objectors will be sent for their period of labour service.<sup>2</sup>

One of the earliest and largest A.S.W. camps to be established under this arrangement was the camp at Montreal River in Ontario.

### 1. Alternative Service at Montreal River Camp.

Montreal River Camp was located approximately 80 miles northwest of Sault Ste. Marie, Ontario, at the point where the Montreal River empties into Lake Superior. The place had formerly been a lumber camp. The first campers arrived there in July, 1941, and during the first summer there were as many as 165 there at one time.<sup>3</sup> The work at this camp was under the direction of the Surveys and Engineering Branch of the Department of Mines and Resources. The work consisted almost exclusively of highway construction in the remaining link of approximately 150 miles of the North Shore Route of Lake Superior between Sault Ste. Marie and Schreiber. The Government of the Province of Ontario cooperated by providing a highway engineer, camp facilities and equipment. The supply roads were kept open during the winter by the Ontario Highways Department. The road on which Alternative Service men were employed leads through scenic territory and Government officials were optimistic about its importance as a tourist attraction. It is of interest to note, that the Surveys and Engineering Branch found that this camp produced the most work per man-day of any camps then in operation in which non-conscientious objectors were employed who were paid at prevailing prices.<sup>4</sup>

In July, 1942, most of the men transferred to the B.C.F.S. (British Columbia Forestry Service) camps. The camp was re-opened for the winter season 1942 — 1943. In May 1943, another important step in the re-conversion program was taken when the Montreal River Camp was closed down as a result of the Government's new "agricultural policy." The 196 Alternative Service workers who were there at the time were returned to the Kitchener-Waterloo area (from where many of them had originally come) and to urgently required work in sugar-beet areas of the Chatham-Wallaceburg districts.

In the A.S.W. camp-system during World War II the Montreal River Camp occupies a rather important place and in several respects might be considered the mother of many camps that were established in the National Parks and later in the British Columbia Forestry Service. Here, at the Montreal River Camp, the first Canadian C.O. publication, *The Northern Beacon*, was born in January, 1942.<sup>5</sup> When in July, 1942, almost the entire personnel of the Camp was transferred to B.C.F.S.

<sup>2</sup> Debates (H.C.) 1941, Vol. IV p. 3261.

<sup>3</sup> Article: Alternative Service Work Camps by Melvin Gingerich. **The Mennonite Encyclopedia**, 1955.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. Annual Report of the Department of Mines and Resources, Lands, Parks and Forests Branch, R. A. Gibson, Director. Vol. II. (1940 - 43)

<sup>5</sup> Cf. An History, in **The Beacon**, Canada's National C.O. Magazine. Vol. 4, No. 1, March, 1945.

TABLE VI

Summary of Major Project Work performed by Alternative Service Men in Canadian National Parks <sup>6</sup>

Nature of Work	From June 1st, 1941, to March 31st, 1946.
Highway construction .....	1.7 miles
Secondary Road construction .....	56.56 miles
Highway improvement .....	50 miles
Secondary Road improvement .....	143.50 miles
Fencing (rods) .....	2147 rods
Fence posts .....	2471 posts
Pony trails improved .....	21.6 miles
Telephone lines built .....	22.95 miles
Telephone lines improved .....	213. miles
Fire trails constructed .....	12.25 miles
Fire trails improved .....	142 miles
Culverts built .....	31
Bridges built .....	11 (one steel bridge)
Telephone poles .....	192
Saw-timber produced (Board feet) .....	2,786,000 bd. ft.
Mine props produced (Linear feet). .....	808,405 linear feet
Sawlogs produced (Ft. board measure) .....	277,915 ft. board
Fuel-wood (cord) .....	7,022 cords
Gravel (hauled and spread) (cubic yards)....	3,112 cubic yards

camps, the paper made its re-appearance under a new name, *The Beacon*, largely as a result of the enthusiasm of the men from Montreal River Camp. Much of the leadership in the camps on the West Coast was provided by men from Montreal River. <sup>7</sup> It was in this camp too, where Rev. J. Harold Sherk, in his capacity as religious director, established certain procedures and patterns for the religious supervision of the camps in the years to follow.

## 2. Alternative Service in National Parks and Forest Experiment Stations.

It was on May 29th, 1941, when Mr. Gardiner announced in Parliament the first call-up for Alternative Service in camps which were to be opened in Canadian National Parks by special agreement with the Department of Mines and Resources. <sup>8</sup>

<sup>6</sup> Compiled by the writer from **Annual Reports**, 1941 - E946, of the Land, Parks, and Forests Branch, of the Department of Mines and Natural Resources.

<sup>7</sup> This was the writer's impression when he served in the B.C.F.S. camps for five months in 1943 in the capacity of camp chaplain.

<sup>8</sup> Debates (H.C.) 1941, Vol. IV, p. 3261.

(1) *Location of Camps.* In 1941 A.S.W. Camps were established in the following National Parks: In Banff National Park (at Banff and Lake Louise), Alberta; in Jasper National Park, Jasper, Alberta; in Kootenay National Park, British Columbia; in Prince Albert National Park, Saskatchewan; and in Riding Mountain National Park (Clear Lake), Manitoba.<sup>9</sup>

In 1942 a small temporary camp was established in Glacier National Park which operated from June to October. Two camps were also established at Forest Experimental Stations: The Kananaskis Camp at Seebe, Alberta, and the Petawawa Camp at Chalk River, Ontario.

(2) *Nature of Work in these Camps.* The prevention and suppression of forest fires was considered to be one of the main responsibilities of Alternative Service personnel in National Parks. Throughout the years of the War, Alternative Service workers were trained in the detection and fighting of forest fires and formed the nucleus of fire-fighting crews. Other projects on which A.S. men were employed included construction or improvement of fire roads and trails, telephone lines, fences, dams, trail bridges and culverts. A considerable quantity of fire-killed timber was salvaged. Tourist camp ground facilities were improved in several Parks and a number of permanent buildings were constructed.<sup>10</sup> A large breakwater was constructed in Prince Albert National Park. Dams were also built in other National Parks to improve the supply of water available for park purposes.

Silviculture, the control of forest insect infestation, was a project which deserves special mention. During 1942 and 1943, the work on forest insect control by A.S. men in the Banff and Kootenay Parks resulted in the salvage of large quantities of saw-timber and mine props.<sup>11</sup> Public tribute was paid to A.S. men engaged in this control of insect infestation in the technical journal of the Canadian Society of Forest Engineers in June, 1945.<sup>12</sup>

A fairly representative, although not exhaustive, summary of major project work is given here to indicate the kind and variety of work in which Alternative Service workers were employed in the National Parks. Table VI.

According to R. A. Gibson, director of the Lands, Parks, and Forest Branch, the "return of work per man-day from Alternative Service workers was very satisfactory, and compared favorably with that performed by regular park labor paid at prevailing rates."<sup>13</sup>

As a result of the new Alternative Service policy inaugurated by Order-in-Council P.C. 2821 on April 7th, 1943, the number of men employed in the camps was reduced considerably by the transfer of many workers to agriculture and industry. On July 15th, 1946, all A.S.W. Camps in the National Parks were officially closed. Most of them had

<sup>9</sup> Annual Report of Department of Mines and Resources, Lands, Parks and Forest Branch, March 31, 1942.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 70.

<sup>11</sup> Annual Report, 1943, *Ibid.*, p. 83.

<sup>12</sup> Forestry Chronicle, June, 1945.

<sup>13</sup> Annual Report, 1943, *Op. cit.* p. 83.

been in continuous operation since their establishment in 1941. As early as April, 1946, transfers to agriculture and industry had so reduced the number of men in these camps that it was decided, in the interests of economy to close the camps in Kootenay and Jasper Parks and to concentrate the remaining workers at Banff. This reduced the camps to two, one at Banff and one at Riding Mountain, both of which continued in operation until July 15th, 1946. The Camp at Prince Albert had also been closed earlier. At the time of the closing of the last two camps there were only 70 men left in these camps, and hence work projects during the last few months were concentrated on maintenance of park facilities.<sup>14</sup>

(3) *Regulations for men in A.S.W. Camps.* For the successful operation of A.S.W. Camps in the National Parks, and later in the B.C. Forestry Service, certain rules and regulations were obviously necessary. Since Alternative Service was rendered in lieu of military service, these regulations conformed partly to the pattern of regulations for the Army. Subsection (6) of Section 251 of National Selective Service Civilian Regulations provided for this aspect of Alternative Service as follows:

The Minister may prescribe rules for the regulation (a) of any place to which persons are required to report under this section and of the conduct of persons required to report to a place pursuant to this section; and (b) of the performance of alternative service.<sup>15</sup>

The following "Camp Rules and Regulations" were prescribed by the Minister of Labour and all men in A.S.W. Camps, whether in the National Parks or in the B.C. Forestry Service, were expected to observe them. The Regulations presented here were issued by the Minister of Labour on July 20th, 1944, in a new and revised formulation.

#### CAMP RULES AND REGULATIONS FOR ALTERNATIVE SERVICE WORK CAMPS

1. Men shall be required to work, according to their ability, forty-eight hours a week and, in an emergency, work such additional hours as the Camp Foreman may deem necessary to meet such emergency situation.
2. No man shall go outside the boundaries of the camp as fixed by the Camp Foreman without the written permission of the Camp Foreman or other person authorized under the Regulations to grant such permission.
3. Every man shall answer a roll-call from time to time as may be required by the Camp Foreman.
4. No man shall be absent from camp without the written authority from the Camp Foreman or other person authorized under the Regulations to grant such permission.

<sup>14</sup> Annual Report, 1947, p. 118.

<sup>15</sup> Order-in-Council P.C. 2821, April 7, 1943.

5. No man shall foment discontent or influence others to assume an antagonistic attitude toward discipline.
6. Every man shall keep himself clean and observe any reasonable demands made upon him by the Camp Foreman to ensure the cleanliness and neatness of the camp.
7. Every case of sickness or accident shall be reported promptly to the Camp Foreman.
8. Where any man desires to make a complaint arising out of the operation of the camp, all such complaints shall be submitted to the Camp Foreman.
9. Remuneration payable to men under the Regulations will be paid monthly and each man will be required to sign a receipt for the remuneration so paid.
10. Each man shall be held responsible for tools and equipment in his care and shall be liable for losses or breakages due to carelessness or neglect.
11. Disorderly conduct and the use of obscene language are forbidden.
12. No person shall have in any camp or bring into any camp any firearm or alcoholic beverage.
13. No visitor shall visit the camp without permission of the Camp Foreman.
14. No visitor shall enter or remain in the camp after the hour of 10:00 p.m.
15. Men shall retire and light shall be extinguished on or before the hour of 10:30 p.m.
16. Smoking in the woods is permitted only at such places and times as may be designated by the Camp Foreman or any person authorized by him.
17. Any man discovering a fire running at large shall at once use every effort to extinguish it and, should the fire be beyond his control he shall, with the least possible delay, notify the Camp Foreman, or the nearest officer in charge.<sup>16</sup>

Those who failed to comply with the above Regulations were guilty of an offence and liable upon summary conviction to either imprisonment or fine or to both. By and large there were few violations of camp rules and camp foremen rarely complained about the conduct of conscientious objectors under their supervision, neither to their superiors nor to the visiting ministers of the Historic Peace Churches.<sup>17</sup>

(4) *Number and Disposition of Men in A.S.W. Camps in National Parks.* The following tables show the number and distribution of Alternative Service men in the National Parks and Forest Experiment Stations. The total number of those employed in the B.C. Forest Ser-

<sup>16</sup> Taken from **Manual of Instruction, File 60.1, S.S.D.**

<sup>17</sup> In the writer's many contacts with camp foremen he cannot recall any serious complaints by camp foremen.

vice is also given, without a breakdown according to camps. Table VII shows the number of men received into these camps up to March 31st, 1943. It also gives the distribution of these men according to administrative mobilization districts. A comparison of Tables VIII and IX graphically indicates the effects of the change in Government policy after May 1st, 1943, when postponed conscientious objectors were transferred from A.S.W. Camps to agriculture and industry.

Table X tells the story of the changes and fluctuations in the number and disposition of Alternative Service workers in the National Parks and Forest Experiment Stations from June, 1941, to July, 1946.

TABLE VII

Total number of men received since opening of Camps in 1941 to March 31, 1943, and Administrative Districts from which they came.

Administrative District	Banff	Jasper	Kootenay and Glacier	Prince Albert	Riding Mtn.	Kananaskis	Petawawa	B.C. Forest Service	Montreal River	Total
"A" London .....								93		93
"B" Toronto .....	74						18	102	478	672
"C" Kingston .....							6			6
"E" Montreal .....							18			18
"I" Charlotte-town, P.E.I. ....							2			2
"J" Winnipeg .....	52	22	33		468	56		145		776
"K" Vancouver, B.C. ....	134	79	79					105		397
"M" Regina, Sask. ....	108	40	55	304				106		613
"N" Edmonton, Alta. ....	10	224	44			39		197		514
Total .....	378	365	211	304	468	95	44	*748	**478	3091

\* Figures only available to January 31, 1943.

\*\* Mostly from Districts "A" and "B", complete breakdown not available.



TABLE VIII  
Total number of men in camps as at March 31, 1943

Banff .....	143
Jasper .....	72
Kootenay .....	124
Prince Albert .....	20
Riding Mountain .....	48
Kananaskis .....	52
Petawawa .....	39
B.C. Forest Service .....	574
Montreal River .....	196
Total .....	1,268

TABLE IX  
Total number of men in camps as at January 31, 1946

Banff .....	29
Jasper .....	17
Kootenay .....	34
Riding Mountain .....	18
Kananaskis .....	37
Petawawa .....	29
Total .....	164

TABLE X  
Number and Disposition of Alternative Service Men in  
National Parks and Forest Experiment Stations<sup>18</sup>  
June 1, 1941 to July 15, 1946

Disposition	June 1, 1941 to March 31, 1942	April 1, 1942 to March 31, 1943	April 1, 1943 to March 31, 1944	April 1, 1944 to March 31, 1945	April 1, 1945 to March 31, 1946	April 1, 1946 to July 15, 1946	TOTAL
1. Total number reported for work .....	1277	872	565	595	456	139	3904 <sup>19</sup>
2. Discharged for medical or other reasons .....	74	128	21	16	15	—	254
3. Enlistment for Active Service .....	16	18	18	6	—	—	58
4. Transferred to agriculture and industry .....	—	—	228	248	258	69	809
5. Deserters .....	—	—	15	6	5	—	26

<sup>18</sup> Compiled by the writer from Annual Reports, *Op. cit.*

<sup>19</sup> Figures overlapping. No data available on exact number of those who reported for work in camps.

### 3. Alternative Service in the B.C. Forest Service Camps.

The original ideas behind the Alternative Service work in British Columbia are very fully explained in the letter of the Honorable T. A. Crerar, Minister of Mines and Resources, to the Honorable A. Wells Gray, Minister of Lands, British Columbia.<sup>20</sup> As a result of several representations by the B.C. Government, in which the possibility of forest fire emergencies due to enemy attack with incendiary bombs was also stressed, an agreement was reached with the Dominion Government whereby a number of A.S. Workers were made available to the Department of Lands, British Columbia, for forest protection duties on the Mainland Coast and Vancouver Island.<sup>21</sup> The agreement became effective in May, 1942, and by the middle of June large numbers of A.S. workers were transferred from Montreal River Camp and camps in the National Parks.

(1) *Location of Camps.* According to Mr. George Tunstall, representative of the Department of Mines and Resources, who supervised the work in British Columbia, the following factors were considered in the selection of sites for A.S.W. camps. (1) Existence of camp buildings which could be utilized; (2) location of hazardous fuel areas; and (3) forest protection or improvement work to be undertaken before or after the fire season.<sup>22</sup>

The camps of the B.C.F.S. were established in three main "project areas." Each project was identified by a special letter or letters. The camps on the Lower Mainland were known as the "G.T." (Green Timbers) camps. The camps located in the southern part of Vancouver Island were known as the "C" (Cowichan) camps; those located north of Nanaimo were designated as the "Q" (Quinsam) camps. The following list gives the project and location of B.C.F.S. camps as well as the number of men as of December, 1943.

Project and Location		Number of Men
"G.T." Camps		
G.T.—1	Green Timbers Manning Depot .....	20
G.T.—2	Hope (Emory Creek) .....	40
G.T.—3	Vedder River, Chilliwack .....	closed <sup>23</sup>
G.T.—4	Haney .....	closed
G.T.—5	Dollarton .....	35
G.T.—6	Powell River .....	30

<sup>20</sup> See complete letter, Appendix, D.

<sup>21</sup> Annual Report of Department of Lands, Forest Branch (B.C.), 1942, p. 54.

<sup>22</sup> Report by George Tunstall on B.C.F.S. Camps, April 29, 1943. File 60.1, S.S.D.

<sup>23</sup> Certain camps were closed for the winter months because there was no suitable project work available in the respective area during the winter season.

## "C" Camps

C — 1	Hill 60, Duncan .....	35
C — 2	Cowichan Lake .....	20
C — 3	Koksilah River .....	35
C — 4	Langford .....	25
C — 5	Nanaimo .....	45
C — 6	Port Alberni .....	25

## "Q" Camps

Q — 1	Quinsam Lake, Campbell River .....	closed
Q — 2	Menzies Bay .....	30
Q — 3	Lower Campbell Lake .....	closed
Q — 4	Courtenay (Puntledge) .....	closed
Q — 5	Bowser .....	35
Q — 6	Horne Lake .....	40
Q — 7	Loveland Lake, Campbell River .....	30
Q — 8	Salmon River, Kelsey Bay .....	closed

Total ..... 450

As indicated in the above list, one of these camps, at Green Timbers Nursery, served as a manning pool to which all men ordered for duty reported initially before being assigned to one of the project camps. Besides the camps mentioned there were a number of smaller units working on special projects in various areas.

(2) *Accommodation and Equipment.*<sup>24</sup> The accommodation at the different camps varied somewhat. At Green Timbers and Cowichan Lake permanent quarters were available, although at Green Timbers it became necessary to erect a few tents as on certain occasions larger groups of men arrived within a short period of time.

At Emory Creek (Hope) advantage was taken of camp buildings erected for the Youth Training Plan some years ago to provide accommodation for young men who were given instruction in prospecting and placer mining.

The Hill 60, Quinsam and Bowser camps, established to re-forest adjoining territory, were taken over in an operating condition with their personnel and equipment. These three camps, as well as those at Seymour Mountain (Dollarton) and Campbell Lake were of canvas over tent frames with board floors. With the inauguration of the A.S.W. program all these camps were improved and much of the canvas was replaced by lumber.

All other camps were built with lumber purchased from Prefabricated Buildings Limited, New Westminster.<sup>25</sup> These huts could easily be dismantled and hauled to a new site where they could be re-erected

<sup>24</sup> Cf. Tunstell, Report, *op. cit.*

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*

with very little loss of time and materials.<sup>26</sup> Each hut could accommodate six men comfortably without crowding.

The kitchen-dining halls were all built sixteen feet in width but varied in length according to the size of the camp.

An office building was erected at each camp which also served as sleeping quarters for the camp foreman.

All camps had wash-huts where hot and cold water was available for washing and "showers".

Recreation huts were also provided in most camps where the men could assemble for sports or religious services.

At most camps first-aid huts had been built where men received first aid in case of injury.<sup>27</sup> These huts were also used for quarantening men with colds or infectious diseases.

More serious than the problem of accommodation was the problem of proper equipment. Very little transport equipment, belonging to the Forest Service, could be made available for this project. It was, therefore, necessary to purchase a number of trucks, light delivery cars, and a few passenger cars. About fifty cars and trucks were purchased, chiefly from the Custodian of enemy property.<sup>28</sup>

Fire-fighting equipment, including power and hand pumps, hose, and hand tools such as axes, saws, grub hoes and mattocks were supplied by the Forest Service from their tool caches. However, they were unable to provide an adequate supply of hand tools and considerable quantities of these had to be purchased.

A few caterpillar tractors, equipped with bulldozers, were made available for road and trail construction. For the conversion of old railway grades into roads the bulldozers were quite adequate, but for new work through standing timber there should have been heavier equipment. In the opinion of George Tunstell, "too much work had to be done with pick and shovel."<sup>29</sup>

Clothing presented a real problem for men who came from the semi-arid prairies to the province of "liquid sunshine." Rain-proof clothing and caulked boots were, therefore, usually supplied to all men upon arrival at camp. The boots were supplied free, but the rain test clothing was provided on a shared cost basis. As indicated in the previous chapter, this situation was remedied only in the late fall of 1944, when all clothing was provided by the B.C.F.S. The minimum provision in clothing was made to avoid loss of time due to frequent and prolonged rains, and caulked boots were supplied as a precautionary measure. Failure to wear them would inevitably result in serious injuries and disabilities.<sup>30</sup>

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<sup>26</sup> In April, 1943, the writer witnessed the moving of an entire camp built of prefabricated huts from Ladysmith to Nanaimo in record time.

<sup>27</sup> In several camps special first-aid courses were given to the men on their request.

<sup>28</sup> Tunstell, Report, *op. cit.*

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*

(3) *Nature of the work.* The services of conscientious objectors were made available to the B.C.F.S. "for assistance in the protection of British Columbia forests from fires started by enemy action or sabotage."<sup>31</sup> Hence the twenty camps mentioned earlier were located strategically throughout the more hazardous portion of Vancouver Island and the Lower Mainland. During the early part of the season, crews in the project areas were fully trained in fire-fighting measures, and in hazardous periods later in the season placed on standby as initial action suppression crews. There were no fires started by "enemy action" as far as Government records show, but a large number resulted from the negligence of Canadian citizens. During the summers of 1942 and 1943, Alternative Service men fought a total of 234 fires.<sup>32</sup> In non-hazardous periods, crews carried out forest protection improvement work. At the close of the season, crews were usually consolidated for the winter months into a reduced number of camps adjacent to the larger forest improvement projects.

In general, the plan worked out very satisfactorily, and, aside from actual fire-fighting work carried out, much valuable and essential forest-protection improvement work was accomplished. Snag-falling and road construction formed the major part of all project work during the winter season. Both snag-falling and the opening up of logged-over lands with trucktrails were considered to be most essential improvements in the fire-proofing of such areas. Over much of the area on which snag-falling was carried out in 1942, reforestation, involving planting of some 7,000,000 seedlings was carried out in the spring of 1943.<sup>33</sup> It may also be pointed out that road-construction undertaken on several projects was at the special request of National Defence authorities and constituted rights-of-way considered of primary military importance to Coast defence as well as forest-protection.<sup>34</sup>

One of the roads of military significance was the one up the Koksilah Valley which should connect with logging railways in Port Renfrew. Another important road was built from Menzies' Bay, at the north end of the Island Highway, to Rock Bay at the mouth of the Salmon River. A third road was constructed from Horne Lake, coming out on the Alberni Highway, a few miles east of Port Alberni. The Koksilah road was entirely new construction and ran through a stand of heavy timber. Both, the Horne Lake — Alberni road as well as the Menzies' Bay — Salmon River road, followed old railway grades most of the way. This, of course, meant the rebuilding of bridges and trestles and in some instances detours around trestles which were too expensive to recondition or maintain. In addition to the foregoing, many road projects were undertaken which were of local importance in that they opened up logged-over lands for fire-fighting and reforestation work. According

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<sup>31</sup> Letter, Crerar to Gray, see Appendix D.

<sup>32</sup> See Summary of major project work at the end of this section.

<sup>33</sup> Annual Report, Forest Branch, *op. cit.* p. 55

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*

to the Annual Report of the B.C.F.S. for 1943,<sup>35</sup> Alternative Service men were engaged in the following projects during that year:

- (1) Fighting forest fires
- (2) Stand-by for fire-fighting during periods of high hazard
- (3) Road-construction, in cooperation with the Department of National Defence
- (4) Snag-falling
- (5) Planting new forests
- (6) Nursery work and seed collection for forest nurseries
- (7) Fuel-wood cutting — for Fuel Control Board
- (8) Farm-aid for Emergency Farm Labour Bureau Service
- (9) Maintenance of forest-protection improvements
- (10) Food-production on A.S.W. vegetable farms.

The last project probably deserves some special mention. In 1942 the administrative officials of A.S.W. camps experienced some difficulty, partly as a result of Government rationing, in obtaining necessary food supplies, and especially vegetables. In order to raise its own vegetables for the camps, the B.C.F.S. leased a small farm of 22 acres near Courtenay. The following vegetables were planted: potatoes, 12 acres; carrots, 5 acres; parsnips, 2½ acres; onions, beets, and turnips, 2½ acres. A bumper crop was harvested. According to the records the crop consisted of 2,000 sacks each of carrots and potatoes, 1,000 sacks of beets and 600 sacks of parsnips and turnips. The project required the full-time service of only four Alternative Service men, except during peak periods, when additional labour was provided from a nearby camp.<sup>36</sup> This A.S.W. vegetable farm proved to be a very popular project with the B.C.F.S. officials as well as with Alternative Service workers who enjoyed the benefits of it in their daily diet.

By Order-in-Council P.C. 2/3514, April 29th, 1943, the draft agreement between the Minister of Labour of Canada and the Minister of Lands of British Columbia, was renewed for one more year. Under the terms of the 1943 — 1944 agreement expenditures were financed as previously, except that the Provincial Government paid one-third of the cost of operating A.S.W. projects. The new agreement also specified, that the number of postponed conscientious objectors available to B.C.F.S. should be reduced from one thousand to a maximum of six hundred.<sup>37</sup>

During 1943 the average enrolment in the B.C.F.S. camps was reduced from 740 men to approximately 450 men, largely as a result of a new policy of granting extended farm leaves to Alternative Service workers. On March 31st, 1944, the agreement with the Province of British Columbia was allowed to expire in line with the Federal Government's new "agricultural policy". All B.C.F.S. camps for A.S.W. men

<sup>35</sup> Annual Report, Forest Branch, 1943, p. 53.

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid*, p. 54.

<sup>37</sup> Order-in-Council P.C. 2/3514, April 29, 1943.

were closed, and the latter went back to the farms, from where eighty per cent had originally come.<sup>38</sup>

An evaluation of the services of A.S.W. men by B.C.F.S. officials will be given in the last chapter. A fair conception of the magnitude of the work accomplished can be obtained from a study of the following summary of major project work, Table XI as compiled by Forester H. G. McWilliams.

TABLE XI  
SUMMARY OF MAJOR PROJECT WORK<sup>39</sup>  
May 4th, 1942 — to March 31st, 1944

Fire Fighting		
Number of fires fought .....		234
Number of man-days on fire fighting .....		8,470
Number of man-days on training and standby .....		4,875
Snag Falling		
Man-days .....		41,910
Acres cleared of snags .....	44,115	
Number of snags felled 10" .....	431,002	
Number of snags felled — 10" .....	159,105	
Total snags felled .....	590,107	
Total basal area square ft. 10" .....	1,031,34	
Average basal area per man-day .....	24 <sup>40</sup>	
Farm Aid		
Man-days .....		840
A.S.W. Farm		
Man-days .....		1,900
Reforestation and Nurseries		
Acres planted .....	21,520	
Number of trees planted .....	17,006,550	
Man-days nursery work .....		8,395
Bushels of cones collected .....	1,050	
Man-days planting trees .....		22,820
Road Construction		
New roads (miles) .....	21.2	
Existing roads improved (miles) .....	154.5	
Railway grades converted to roads .....	123.5	
Number of culverts built .....	625	
Number of bridges built .....	38	
Man-days on roads and trails .....		51,420

<sup>38</sup> According to information given by Paul J. Martin, Assistant to Minister of Labour, on February 24, 1944, approximately 80% of all Alternative Service workers were either farmers or farmers' sons. Debates (H.C.) 1944, Vol. I, p. 810.

<sup>39</sup> Information received by letter: R. G. McKee, Assistant Chief Forester, to writer, on June 15, 1956.

<sup>40</sup> Basal area per set actually engaged on snag falling per eight-hour day averaged 64 sq. ft.

<b>Trail Construction</b>		
New trails (miles) .....	16.3	
Existing trails improved (miles) .....	29.2	
<b>Telephone Line Construction</b>		
New Line (miles) .....	25.7	
Existing line improved (miles) .....	8.5	
Man-days .....		1,210
<b>Fuel Production (Fuel Control Board)</b>		
Cordwood produced, (cords) .....	11,273	
Millwood produced, (cords) .....	611	
Man-days on cordwood .....		22,660
Man-days on millwood recovery .....		190
<b>Miscellaneous Projects</b>		
Man-days .....		6,660
Total man-days, effective project work (54%) .....		171,450
Total man-days, May 4, 1942 to March 31, 1944 .....		319,308

It is obvious from this summary that in scope the work was not restricted to forest protection and fire-fighting. Much of the work was done on projects which were a part of a long-range improvement program and resulted in permanent assets for the B.C.F.S. as well as for the logging industry. In view of these facts it is not surprising that the B.C. Government was very reluctant to release these men even long after the threats of fire-hazards due to enemy attacks were past.

## II. ALTERNATIVE SERVICE OUTSIDE CAMPS

### 1. Alternative Service in Agriculture.<sup>41</sup>

From May 1st, 1943, when P.C. 2821 gave the Department of Labour the authority to direct postponed conscientious objectors outside camps, right up to the end of Alternative Service contracts, agriculture was given top priority in referrals. This fact is graphically shown on Table V, page 61, which gives the number and disposition of postponed conscientious objectors as of December 31, 1945.

The basis of a conscientious objector's employment in agriculture was an agreement<sup>42</sup> signed by the employer and the conscientious objector as employee which had to be approved by the Divisional Alternative Service Officer. Under the terms of this contract, the employer agreed to provide the conscientious objector with board and lodging, and to pay the prevailing wage rate of agricultural labor. Out of his earnings, the Alternative Service man received \$25.00 monthly, the employer agreeing to pay monthly the balance of his earnings (less any amount which by law he was required to pay to other persons or the state, taxes for instance) to the Canadian Red Cross Society. Agreements ran for vary-

<sup>41</sup> Information taken largely from *Historical Account*, Op. cit.

<sup>42</sup> See P.C. 2821, Section 252, Sub-section (5).



ing periods, but not for more than a year, and could be renewed with the approval of the A.S. Officer. The net earnings, then, it will be observed, for a man employed in agriculture, were \$25.00 per month plus board and room. Provision was also made for self-employed farmers who were required to complete individual undertakings calling for Red Cross payments according to ability, the average monthly payment being \$15.00.

Placements in agriculture were largely made on the advice of the provincial operating agency of the Dominion-Provincial Committee on Farm Labour. This agency was best-informed and qualified to know the relative urgency of the labor needs of individual farmers in their respective districts. The decision of the Alternative Service Branch to accept the cooperation offered by the Dominion-Provincial Committee on Farm Labour and use their agencies as farm labor placement adviser, while still maintaining the control over the movements and activities of Alternative Service men, was in the opinion of Alternative Service Officers a most constructive and profitable move. In Ontario, where no Provincial Committee was available to recommend placements, the District Agricultural Representative of Waterloo County, where the majority of Ontario agricultural conscientious objectors were located, assumed this responsibility and rendered valuable service to the Alternative Service Branch in his capacity.

As an indication of the priority given to agriculture in placing postponed conscientious objectors it may be noted that, on the average, over 65% of the 10,700 men were employed in agriculture, and during peak seasons for urgent farm labor the percentage was considerably higher.<sup>43</sup>

By midsummer of 1944 it had become clear that \$25.00 per month for agricultural conscientious objectors, who had to provide for dependents, was insufficient. An Order-in-Council, P.C. 5130, alleviated the condition of men in this category by legalizing the payment to him of allowances for dependents and also for hospital, medical or dental services, such allowances to be paid out of that portion of his earnings designated for the Red Cross.<sup>44</sup> The A.S. Officer was given discretionary power to fix the amount of the allowances for dependents and also to approve any other payments which conscientious objectors or other persons were entitled to receive. The amount of the allowances was determined by the A.S. Officer according to the individual circumstances of each case and, of course, was dependent on the amount of the Alternative Service man's earnings that were earmarked for the Red Cross Society. An average dependent allowance was from \$5.00 to \$10.00 a month for a married man with an additional \$5.00 for each child.

After the cessation of hostilities in Europe another change was made in the amount of the earnings of a postponed conscientious objector employed in agriculture that should be diverted to the Red Cross. On June 1st, 1945, under Ministerial authority, the maximum amount to

<sup>43</sup> There were 6655 men employed in agriculture as of December 31, 1945. See Table V in Chapter IV.

<sup>44</sup> Cf. Order-in-Council P.C. 5130, Section 254, Subsection (1) July 6, 1944.

be paid monthly either by self-employed farmers or to be diverted monthly from the earnings of postponed conscientious objectors employed in agriculture, was set at \$5.00.

When this change in policy was announced, there was an almost immediate reaction from the Canadian Legion (Pacific Branch) which protested against this "conchy pay boost". Addressing a meeting of the newly formed Grandview Branch No. 179 of the Canadian Legion in the Masonic Hall in Vancouver on July 4th, Robert Macnicol, Provincial Command secretary, declared that the Canadian Legion would register an "emphatic protest" to the Dominion Government on a wage increase granted to conscientious objectors employed on farms.

Simultaneously with the 'wiping out' of conscription, according to Mr. Macnicol, a Federal Government directive was issued under which the minimum wage paid to "conchies" was raised from \$50.00 per month, plus board, to \$70.00 plus board. In addition, a compulsory deduction of \$25.00 for the Red Cross was reduced to \$5.00.<sup>45</sup>

In his address Mr. Macnicol compared this wage increase with the \$10.00 extra per month granted to veterans of the European war who had volunteered for service in the Pacific. "Is this what the Government means by equality of sacrifice?" the speaker concluded.<sup>46</sup>

The Government, however, felt justified in its policy since postponed conscientious objectors were still under the jurisdiction of Alternative Service Officers, who could direct these men to essential employment — a type of employment that was not attractive to most veterans.

This reduction in the amount diverted to the Red Cross was at least partly responsible for bringing new conscientious objector labor to agriculture from non-agricultural pursuits where the Red Cross payments remained higher. It also improved the economic position of Alternative Service men and their dependents. Officials of the Department of Labour realized that there is a limit to how long any man will continue to work hard on a mere subsistence level.

Also on June 1st, 1945, all married conscientious objectors over thirty years of age were relieved entirely of Red Cross payments as long as they remained in agriculture.

All conscientious objectors under agricultural contract, however, remained under direction from their respective Alternative Service Officers, even though their Red Cross payments were eliminated. Final de-control for Alternative Service men came more than a year later, as stated earlier, on August 15th, 1946.

## 2. Alternative Service in Industry<sup>47</sup>

The terms and procedure in respect to employment in industry and other non-agricultural pursuits, were also prescribed by Order-in-Council

<sup>45</sup> As reported in the *Vancouver Sun*, July 5, 1945, p. 10.

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>47</sup> The term "industry" is used here in a broad sense, including all non-agricultural employment.

P.C. 2821.<sup>48</sup> The Order required that an agreement be signed by the employer and the conscientious objector as employee which had to be approved by the Divisional Alternative Service Officer. Because the employers in cities and towns as a rule, however, were not in a position to furnish board and lodgings like employers in agriculture, they were required to pay an allowance, therefore, in lieu of board and room to the conscientious objector in addition to the \$25.00 monthly portion of his earnings. The allowance was set at \$38.00 a month, with some exceptions where special conditions prevailed, making the net return to the conscientious objector \$63.00 per month. The balance of his earnings, less income tax charges, were paid by the employer to the Canadian Red Cross Society. A self-employed postponed conscientious objector was required to complete an individual undertaking, calling for a monthly Red Cross contribution according to the individual's circumstances, the average monthly payment being approximately \$25.00.<sup>49</sup>

Placements in industry and in other non-agricultural occupations were made either directly by the Divisional Alternative Service Officer or by a local Employment Office which was authorized to act on behalf of an A.S. Officer. Most of the men placed in such pursuits were either unsuited for agricultural labor or they possessed such mechanical or professional skills as justified their placement in the essential industries for which they were best qualified by training and experience.<sup>50</sup>

Just as in the case of agricultural labor, by mid-summer of 1944 it had become clear that many of the Alternative Service men employed in industry were unable to carry on any longer on a monthly return of \$63.00. Moreover, industrial employers were becoming more and more reluctant to retain conscientious objectors in their employment under the required form of employment contract involving Red Cross payments and complicated tax deductions. They were eager to retain the services of these Alternative Service men but on a plan which would permit them to pay the conscientious objector in the same manner as their other employees. With regard to the Red Cross payments these employers suggested that this matter be handled by the conscientious objectors directly with the Canadian Red Cross Society and the District Treasury Officer.

A correction of the difficulties mentioned above was authorized in P.C. 5130 of July 6th, 1944, to which reference has already been made in connection with the employment of postponed conscientious objectors in agriculture. According to this Order, the A.S. Officer was authorized to take from the Alternative Service man without involving his employer, a direct undertaking to pay monthly to the Canadian Red Cross a specified amount in accordance with the amount of his earnings.

<sup>48</sup> Cf. Order-in-Council P.C. 2821, Section 252, Subsection (5). April 7, 1943.

<sup>49</sup> Data taken from Historical Account, *op. cit.*

<sup>50</sup> There were 1412 men employed in miscellaneous essential industries as of December 31, 1945. This number does not include those employed in logging, packing plants, construction, etc. cf. Table V, Chapter IV.

Table XII shows the scale of payments approved by the Minister of Labour:

TABLE XII  
Average Past Monthly Earnings      Monthly Red Cross Payments

Up to \$ 80.00	No payment
\$ 81.00 to \$ 90.00	\$ 3.00
\$ 91.00 to \$100.00	\$ 7.00
\$101.00 to \$110.00	\$10.00
\$111.00 to \$120.00	\$15.00
\$121.00 to \$130.00	\$20.00
\$131.00 to \$140.00	\$25.00
\$141.00 to \$150.00	\$30.00
\$151.00 to \$160.00	\$35.00
\$161.00 to \$170.00	\$40.00
\$171.00 to \$180.00	\$45.00
\$181.00 and up	\$50.00 <sup>51</sup>

In arriving at the above rates consideration was given to the fact that the employer would be paying the A.S. worker in the same manner as his other employees, making full tax deductions and any other deductions that he would be making in the case of ordinary employees engaged in a similar capacity. <sup>52</sup>

The scale of rates applied to postponed conscientious objectors whether married or single, with or without dependents. No change was made in the amounts being paid to the Red Cross by self-employed persons. Alternative Service Officers were authorized to use their discretion and judgement in dealing with these cases on their individual merits.

On June 1st, 1945, a further reduction in the amount of the contribution to the Red Cross was effected by Ministerial authority. Whereas however, there remained only a token-payment of \$5.00 a month for those conscientious objectors who were employed in agriculture, the scale of rates for men in industrial employment was reduced by 50 per cent and the maximum monthly payment was set at \$15.00. Married men over thirty years of age were relieved of any Red Cross payments, but as in the case of Alternative Service men employed in agriculture, they remained under the jurisdiction of the Alternative Service Officer and could not change their place of employment without his direction or approval.

Under the reduced payment scale, Alternative Service men were required to take care of their own medical expenses, as well as of their other expenses, that had previously been paid from the Red Cross portion of their earnings. With the end of Alternative Service on August

<sup>51</sup> Alternative Service Records, Red Cross Payments, File No.60.30 - 44. S.S.D.

<sup>52</sup> For income tax purposes Red Cross payments came under the heading of charitable donations.

15th, 1946, all contracts and contributions to the Red Cross, of course, were cancelled.

For the most part, very little difficulty was experienced in placing postponed conscientious objectors in essential employment. Jehovah's Witnesses, as a rule, refused to sign employment agreements, and hence they were ordered to perform Alternative Service in A.S.W. Camps. Whenever a conscientious objector, who had signed an agreement, felt that he was not properly treated, he had the right to complain to his Alternative Service Officer. The records reveal very few instances of any such complaints. It was usually impressed upon the employer that conscientious objectors were to be treated in the same manner as any other employee. If, on the other hand, a conscientious objector failed to comply with the regulations governing industrial employment for any reason, he was transferred to an A.S.W. Camp after having been warned.

In reply to a question in the House of Commons by M. J. Coldwell on October 1st, 1945, why conscientious objectors were still retained in A.S.W. Camps, the Minister of Labour, Mr. Mitchell replied as follows:

It is kept constantly before the men who are occupying alternative service work camps that arrangements will be made to transfer them from the camp at once if they will agree to enter into a contract whereby they will be making contributions to the national welfare. Their refusal to comply with these regulations accounts for their detention in camps.<sup>53</sup>

Of the 196 conscientious objectors still in A.S.W. Camps as of October 2nd, 1945, 169 were Jehovah's Witnesses according to a reply given in Parliament by Mr. Mitchell.<sup>54</sup>

From the above it is evident that the Government made every effort to transfer men from the camps to farms and industry if they were willing to comply with the Regulations.

The following table gives the number and disposition of postponed conscientious objectors in relation to Red Cross payments.

TABLE XIII

Number and Disposition of Conscientious Objectors  
as of December 31, 1945, in relation to Red Cross Payments

1. Under Red Cross Agreements in Agriculture .....	4,215
2. Under Red Cross Agreements, non-Agriculture .....	1,624
3. Relieved of Red Cross Agreements on compassionate and other grounds .....	1,143
4. Relieved of Red Cross Agreements as a result of June 1st Regulation changes .....	1,876

<sup>53</sup> Debates (H.C.) 1945, Vol. I., p. 592.

<sup>54</sup> Debates (H.C.) 1945, Vol. I., p. 710.

5. In A.S.W. Camps .....	241 <sup>55</sup>
6. Serving jail sentences .....	12
7. In hands of Enforcement Division .....	34
8. "Can't Locates" in hands of R.C.M.P. ....	217
9. Disposition pending or under review .....	889
Total .....	10,851

### 3. Alternative Service in the Royal Canadian Army Medical Corps and the Canadian Dental Corps

As stated earlier in the Chapter on Government policy, Order-in-Council P.C. 7251, of September 16th, 1943, authorized enlistment of postponed conscientious objectors for service anywhere in non-combatant duties in the Royal Canadian Army Medical Corps and the Canadian Dental Corps. Enlistment was voluntary, but those who joined the staff of these medical services in the Canadian Army became subject to military law, having all the obligations and duties of a soldier on active service with any unit or formation of the Army except that he was not under any circumstances required to bear arms.

Applications for such service were made to Divisional Alternative Service Officers and they in turn advised the proper military authority for the Military District in which the applicant was located. Those men whose offer of such service was accepted ceased to be subject to Alternative Service Regulations. During their service with the Canadian Army they received regular pay, dependents allowance, etc. After demobilization they were also entitled to the benefits extended to other veterans.

According to information received from Colonel C. P. Stacey,<sup>56</sup> Director of the Historical Section of the Department of National Defence, 700 conscientious objectors had volunteered for service in the Forces by 1944. From information given on the disposition of postponed conscientious objectors as of December 31st, 1945, in Chapter IV, it would appear that this figure would include approximately 540 conscientious objectors who offered their services to the Armed Forces for combatant service. The total number who actually served in the Canadian Army under the arrangements made as a result of P.C. 7251, was only 227. This is also the number given by Colonel Stacey.<sup>57</sup> This number represents only a small percentage of the 10,851 persons postponed from compulsory military service as conscientious objectors as of December 31, 1945.

As for employment, "records indicate that those accepted for military service were employed as hospital orderlies or stretcher-bearers."<sup>58</sup> According to Colonel Stacey, there appears to be no record of whether or not any of these soldiers went overseas. Mr. Stacey finds this lack of

<sup>55</sup> Men on temporary farm leave included in this number.

<sup>56</sup> Letter: Stacey to writer, September 28, 1956.

<sup>57</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>58</sup> *Ibid.*

record "understandable in view of the instructions setting forth conditions of service for conscientious objectors, which stressed that they were to be treated as ordinary soldiers in every respect."<sup>59</sup>

It is a well-known fact in all Mennonite communities, however, that a fairly large number of these non-combatant service men went overseas and served in various theatres of the European War.<sup>60</sup>

The question of non-combatant service in the Army was a highly controversial issue among the various branches of the Historic Peace Churches during World War II and after. Among the Mennonites, the Russländer group was more or less in favor of it. All other groups rejected non-combatant duty in the army as an acceptable form of Alternative Service. According to available information, British Columbia furnished the largest number of recruits (sixty men) for non-combatant service in the Canadian Army. Reasons for the small number who enlisted for this service have been stated in the chapter on policy.

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<sup>59</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>60</sup> Among the writer's former students and friends there are those who served in the R.C.A.M.C. in Italy, France, Germany, as well as in England.

## Chapter VI

### RELIGIOUS GROUPS AND ACTIVITIES IN ALTERNATIVE SERVICE

Conscientious objectors in Canadian Alternative Service Camps were almost one hundred per cent "religious objectors", i.e., they objected to military training on religious grounds. Hence it is quite appropriate to devote one chapter to the various religious groups which composed Alternative Service personnel, and to discuss briefly some aspects of their religious and recreational activities. As has been noted earlier, the leaders of the Historic Peace Churches were most anxious to obtain a form of Alternative Service which would make religious supervision possible. Alternative Service in camps provided unique opportunities in this respect. With the change of Government policy in May, 1943, which eventually led to the closing of all the camps in the B.C. Forest Service, a new phase also began with regard to religious supervision. The men who were placed under contract in agriculture and industry were employed on such jobs either singly or in very small groups, so that organized religious activities of C.O.'s as a group became impracticable. Discussion in this chapter will, therefore, be restricted to religious life and recreational activities in A.S.W. Camps.

#### I. GOVERNMENT REGULATIONS

In Chapter nine of "Rules and Regulations" issued for the guidance of Superintendents in Alternative Service Work Camps provision is made for religious services, recreation and special training. The Regulations expressly state that

Opportunity shall be provided, wherever practicable, for men to attend religious services. The Department will not authorize the expenditure of money to provide such service in Camp but full cooperation should be extended to any denomination wishing to send a minister at their own expense.<sup>1</sup>

Not all religious groups were in a position to make use of this provision; the Mennonites, however, whose young men constituted more than sixty per cent of Alternative Service workers, usually had several

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<sup>1</sup> Rules and Regulations, rev. edition, July 20, 1944, p.18.



of their ministers serving in various "camp parishes." Since some camps on Vancouver Island as well as on the West Coast were located near points where the men could attend religious services of their own denomination, camp foremen were instructed to provide truck transportation for such purpose.<sup>2</sup>

Clergymen or spiritual leaders, who, at the discretion of the Camp Superintendent might be permitted to live in Camp, and who were capable and willing to take over the supervision of the recreational activities of the men, could be detailed to such service by the Superintendent, but no wages were to be allowed for such services. The Regulations also provided for the possibility of a "resident" minister under certain conditions. If a minister was "willing to do any work, he may be employed as a laborer at prevailing rates for a sufficient length of time each month to enable him to pay for his board."<sup>3</sup>

## II. DENOMINATIONAL GROUPS

Conscientious objectors in Alternative Service camps did not constitute a homogenous religious group. Almost all major denominations and most smaller sects were represented. In one camp which numbered only forty men the writer found twenty three religious groups represented when he visited this camp in April, 1943. J. W. Nickel, who served as religious director of C.O. camps during 1942 and 1943, has given this vivid description of the religious background of Alternative Service men:

Who were these conscientious objectors? There were those from the United Church of Canada, well educated, talented and refined young men, many of them university graduates. There were the 'Seventh Day Adventists' with their zeal to propagate their particular views on the Sabbath. There were the International Bible Students ('Jehovah's Witnesses' as they were commonly called) haranguing that all present governments were evil. There were the Pentecostals with their doctrine on the Holy Spirit. There were the Nazarene and the Church of God in Christ boys with their mild dispositions, the Christadelphians, the Plymouth Brethren, Friends, Methodists, and a host of others, including one who professed an unswerving faith in 'Father Divine'. The majority of them, however, were Mennonites, representing all branches of the faith.<sup>4</sup>

In his research the writer has been unable to get a complete and accurate picture with respect to religious affiliation of the men in Alternative Service. The following list has been compiled from statistical data made available to the Chief Alternative Service Officer towards the end of the War by Divisions "B" (Toronto), "J" (Winnipeg), "M" (Regina), and "N" (Edmonton).

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>4</sup> Nickel, J. W. "The Canadian Conscientious Objector" in *Mennonite Life*, Vol III., No. 1, January, 1948.

TABLE XIV

## Distribution of Conscientious Objectors According to Religious Affiliation

1. Mennonites .....	4425	13. Society of Friends .....	8
2. Hutterites .....	482	14. Church of Christ .....	7
3. Doukhobors .....	406	15. Anglican .....	4
4. Jehovah's Witnesses ....	172	16. Baptist .....	3
5. Tunkers .....	79	17. Roman Catholic .....	1
6. Christadelphians .....	72	18. Salvation Army .....	1
7. Seventh Day Adventists ..	58	19. Christ Disciples .....	1
8. United Church .....	47	20. Presbyterian .....	1
9. Brethren .....	34	21. Christian Science .....	1
10. Plymouth Brethren .....	28	22. Megiddo Mission .....	1
11. Pentecostal .....	18	23. Pacifist .....	1
12. Evangelical .....	11	24. No religion specified ..	297
Total .....		6,158 <sup>5</sup>	

It should be noted that this list does not show the number of religious groups in the Alternative Service camps, but rather the number registered in the four Mobilization Districts mentioned above. The Doukhobors listed came almost exclusively from the Province of Saskatchewan, but as indicated earlier, very few, if any, were performing Alternative Service in camps.

Other religious groups represented in the camps included Free Methodists, Moravians, "Two by Twos", Occulists, Theosophists, and followers of "Father Divine."<sup>6</sup>

With such radical differences in religious backgrounds and beliefs it is rather remarkable how well these men got along with each other, and that they were willing and able, with some exceptions, to have common religious services during their stay in camp.

### III. RELIGIOUS SERVICES

The large number of relatively small camps made it virtually impossible to have a resident minister stationed in each camp. Some exceptions to this rule were the Montreal River Camp and several larger in the National Parks. In the British Columbia Forestry Service camps, of which there were about 19, the clergymen adopted an itinerant ministry somewhat after the pattern of the early circuit riders of the Methodists. The automobile, however, had displaced the horse of the

<sup>5</sup> Compiled from records of Research and Statistics Branch, Department of Labour, Ottawa.

<sup>6</sup> From Diary of writer, April, 1943.

pioneer period. In an article which appeared in the *Christian Monitor* October, 1943, Paul L. Storms, himself an Alternative Service man in the B.C.F.S., thus describes the religious supervision in the camps:

No ministers are stationed at any one camp, but those officially appointed make their rounds from camp to camp, so that a visit is expected on the average of once in every two weeks. However, the boys in each camp have their own religious organization. A religious director is appointed who seeks to look after the spiritual needs of his fellow campers, and calls services of fellowship and worship from time to time. These services are held daily in some camps and consist of preaching, young peoples' meeting, Sunday school, prayer meeting, Bible discussion . . .

The appearance of a visiting minister in camp is always heralded joyfully, and such visits are oftentimes of real spiritual uplift. Some ministers make the rounds of the camps only once, while others stay in our midst for three or even six months. One minister in his itinerary covers at least eight hundred miles in making a complete circuit, and he endeavors to get to each camp once a month. From the most southern camp on Vancouver Island at Langford to the most northern one at Rock Bay the distance is over two hundred miles. Conditions are such that the minister must travel by car, by bus, by rail, by boat, and often on foot for many miles.<sup>7</sup>

Although the various branches of the Mennonite faith usually had several ministers engaged in this "camp ministry", there was no organized plan of all Canadian Mennonite Conferences for systematic visitation of the camps. One reason for this lack of coordination and co-operation is to be found in the schism which occurred in the early part of the War between the Kanadier and Russländer Mennonites as described in chapter two. In comparing the "church camp system" of the United States with the "government camp system" of Canada it might be said that there was a closer contact between church and camp in the former, as well as a more adequate religious supervision. Greater educational opportunities were also provided for the C.P.S. men in the United States.<sup>8</sup>

In the Rules and Regulations there was also a provision for a limited educational program. Regulation number five specifically states that: "Arrangements should be made to provide lectures on, or give instruction in the following subjects: first aid, personal hygiene, sanitation, and citizenship and other subjects as arranged."<sup>9</sup>

Little or no effort was made, however, to realize the objectives indicated. Since part of this responsibility was placed on the Superintendents of the camps,<sup>10</sup> who were in many cases not qualified for such assignments, the program was not even seriously considered.

<sup>7</sup> Quoted by Melvin Gingerich in *Service for Peace*, Akron, Pennsylvania: Mennonite Central Committee, 1949, p. 423.

<sup>8</sup> cf. Gingerich, *Service for Peace*, *op. cit.* Chapter XIX.

<sup>9</sup> Rules and Regulations, *Op. Cit.*, p. 18.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, (Regulation number seven).

#### IV. RECREATIONAL ACTIVITIES

Instructions to the Superintendents of Alternative Service camps definitely stipulated that

Facilities shall be provided for the recreation of men in camps. For this purpose the equipment purchased for camps established under the National Forestry Program is available and is considered adequate. Articles which have been lost or broken should be replaced by purchase. Radios will not be supplied although they are permissible in camp.<sup>11</sup>

Except during actual fire-fighting the men in the camps had considerable leisure time since their regular work day terminated at 5 o'clock. In the evening they pursued various hobbies such as carpentry, leather-crafts, painting, or just reading. Volley-ball was a favorite form of recreation in all camps, probably because limited space did not permit the playing of baseball or football. On week-ends and Sundays photography, hiking and mountain-climbing were popular pastimes. Mountain-climbing seemed to have a special attraction and fascination for the "sons of the prairie", who found themselves for the first time surrounded by the grandeur of the majestic "Rockies" or other mountain peaks along the B.C. Coast and on Vancouver Island.

As indicated in Chapter V, recreation huts were established in all the larger camps where the men could assemble for sports or for religious services. The damp, rainy weather of the B.C. coast and the Island often forced the men to seek recreation indoors.

Since their work-day was only from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m., some of the men found a different type of recreation after working hours in gainful employment on farms or in business establishments nearby. Many married men were engaged in such work in order to supplement their meagre earnings (fifty cents per day), and thus be in a better position to support their families.

#### V. PUBLICATION

An important link between Alternative Service men and their friends back home was the monthly C. O. Magazine, "The Beacon". It also strengthened the bonds of fellowship among the men scattered in many camps over a wide area. The birth of this camp publication took place at the Montreal River Camp, about eighty miles north of Sault Ste. Marie, on Lake Superior, Ontario. With Wesley Brown as Editor-in-Chief, the "*Northern Beacon*" made its first appearance on January 3rd, 1942. Seven specific points are listed for the purpose of publishing this paper: (1) to furnish a worthwhile enterprise for the Conchie boys, whereby their leisure time may be spent profitably; (2) for the con-

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<sup>11</sup> Ibid.

venience of the Conchie boys in mailing a newsletter home or to some friends, (3) to enlighten the outside world with the activities of Camp Montreal River, (4) to help the boys of the camp to become acquainted with one another, (5) to deepen the spirit of friendship already manifest in the camp, (6) to promote enthusiasm in new projects through which the camp may benefit, and (7) to meet the demand of interested parties concerned in the camp.<sup>12</sup>

Articles on religious life, sports, camp doings, Who's Who column, letters from readers, poetry, work projects, American C.O.'s, etc., made up an extremely interesting news tabloid. From January 3rd, 1942, to July 4th, 1942, ten issues had been published. With the transfer of the men from Montreal River to the B.C. Forestry Service camps, publication was temporarily discontinued. However, the spark of a camp paper was not extinguished in the heart of the Editor and his associates by this transfer. *The Northern Beacon* experienced a re-birth under a new name: *The Beacon*. Camp Q 3, Campbell River, B.C., was the new publishing center. *The Beacon* was published as an inter-camp communication for men in Alternative Service camps in the B.C.F.S. In publishing this paper "it was necessary to co-operate with the authorities of the B.C.F.S. so that any dissatisfactions between the A.S.W. men and the Forest Service personnel be entirely avoided or minimized."<sup>13</sup>

*The Beacon* was published as an inter-denominational paper, giving equal voice to the various religious groups. According to the Editor-in-Chief, viewpoints of the various groups "were published so as to strike a balance and no viewpoint of any one group was to become the belief of the paper. No political issues or discussions were allowed in the paper."<sup>14</sup>

In circulation, the paper grew from 600 in October, 1942, to 1,055 in September, 1943.<sup>15</sup> In May, 1943 Wesley Brown tendered his resignation as Editor-in-Chief at a conference of camp representatives in Nanaimo, B.C. One reason for Mr. Brown's resignation was the fact that he had fallen into disfavor with B.C.F.S. officials because of a questionnaire which he had circulated among A.S.W. men.<sup>16</sup>

John L. Fretz, of Kitchener, Ontario, was unanimously chosen as the new editor of "Canada's National C.O. Magazine." The publication equipment was transferred from Q. 3, Campbell River, to C. 2, Lake Cowichan.

Another great change for the A.S.W. program came in March, 1944, at which time the camps in the B.C.F.S. were closed and men were directed back to their home provinces. The editorial staff tried hard

<sup>12</sup> *The Northern Beacon*, January 3, 1942.

<sup>13</sup> John Fretz, in An History, *The Beacon*, March, 1945, p. 1.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 2.

<sup>15</sup> *The Beacon*, Vol. II, No.9, p. 2

<sup>16</sup> In this questionnaire men were asked to give their views on various forms of Alternative Service, and what they would like to do, if they had a choice.

to continue the publication of the paper during the year that followed, but in the early summer of 1945, publication was discontinued.

During its brief life-span *The Beacon* was published monthly and the subscription price was one dollar per year.

## VI. EVALUATION BY ALTERNATIVE SERVICE MEN

Although the work in A.S.W. camps as a rule was rather monotonous and made little or no provision for the utilization of the special training or skills with which the men came to camp, it was nevertheless an enriching experience for most of them according to their own testimony. J. W. Nickel, who spent some time in the camps as an Alternative Service worker and later served in the capacity of religious director, gives his impressions in these words.

What did camp life do for the conscientious objector? For one thing, it taught those, who because of previous isolated church life held the members of another denomination in narrow esteem, to respect and love their brothers.

... Through discussion and observation these men had a wonderful opportunity to free themselves of denominational bigotry. By the same means, they arrived at destinations in their spiritual development in which they experienced in a broader way what their religious leaders and teachers at home had often only hinted at and some had in vain attempted to instill.<sup>17</sup>

In a letter to the writer, the Rev. H. R. Baerg, M.A., B.D., who spent more than a year in A.S.W. camps in Alberta, gives the following interesting evaluation of his own experience during World War II:

Alternative Service constituted for us a program of submission. Our's was not to reason why, or to ask why, to argue or denounce. We were conscripted to spend the same amount of time under similar regulations as the boys in other branches of the Service. We now had an opportunity to confirm our faith by rendering a sacrifice, not of our lives but of our time. For some time spent in camp was indeed boring and monotonous; however, for most of us this was a chapter in our lives when we could learn many lessons and gain worthwhile and meaningful experiences.

Numerous citizens of our country could not understand our singular stand and mistrusted our motives, thinking that a lack of loyalty and courage was at the base. It was our duty to resolve the misunderstanding by living up to our message of love... A number of working projects were unrealistic and not exactly of "national importance"; some of the foremen were unlearned, unprincipled, and unsocial loggers or 'bushwackers'; a few of the superintendents were prejudiced; some of the fellowdrafties were partisan, obstinate, and obtuse. Under these circumstances

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<sup>17</sup> Nickel, *Op. cit.* p. 27.

it was imperative that we who were attempting to give an affirmation of our faith be bouyant, courageous, resourceful, and confident.

It was an enlarging experience to maintain personal love and to create close friendship with the various individuals of different background and training . . . It was indeed an experience requiring self-discipline, self-understanding, and inter-personal and inter-group understanding.<sup>18</sup>

In his numerous contacts with A.S.W. men the writer found that the views expressed above were shared by the majority of the men. They were grateful to the Government for the opportunity to perform a type of service which did not violate their convictions with regard to war and military service. Many conscientious objectors felt, however, that a form of service more closely related to the suffering created by the war situation would have been a more satisfying and a more appropriate expression of their convictions. A relatively small number, as has been pointed out in Chapter V, thought that service in the R.C.A.M.C. would provide the opportunity to give a more adequate expression to their faith.

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<sup>18</sup> Letter: Baerg to writer, March 18, 1957.

## **Chapter VII**

### **CONTRIBUTIONS AND ACHIEVEMENTS OF ALTERNATIVE SERVICE**

In this last chapter an attempt will be made to evaluate the services of conscientious objectors during World War II in terms of some tangible benefits which their work has produced for the Canadian economy. To evaluate the contributions of these men in the realm of the spirit — their significance to the preservation of freedom of conscience and religion in a democracy — would be a much more difficult and certainly also a much more controversial matter. That the work of conscientious objectors resulted in material benefits which may be considered of "national importance" can be readily shown, however, from Government records and articles in the Canadian Press. Several phases will be given special consideration.

#### **I PROTECTION AND IMPROVEMENTS OF CANADIAN FORESTS**

As indicated previously, the primary reason given by the Government in assigning conscientious objectors to Alternative Service in the National Parks and later in the B.C. Forestry Service was the prevention and suppression of forest fires. When the Honorable J. T. Thorson, Minister of National War Services, announced in Parliament on May 11th, 1942, the agreement which the Government had entered into with the Department of Lands of British Columbia, he stated that under this agreement "a very large number of conscientious objectors will be doing, in lieu of military service, alternative service of an important national character, namely the prevention of forest fires in that province."<sup>1</sup>

Immediately upon their arrival in A.S.W. camps, conscientious objectors were given intensive training in the fighting of forest fires. In a letter to Justice A. M. Manson, Chairman of the Mobilization Board, Division "K", A. Wells Gray, Minister of Lands and Forests, describes the effectiveness of these fire-fighting crews in the B.C. Forestry Service. Mr. Gray writes:

By way of illustration in this regard, it might be noted that the average elapsed time between report of a fire and departure of fully equipped crew from the trained camps last summer was less than three minutes. A surprise test of a trained "stand-by" crew gave the following results:

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<sup>1</sup> Debates (H.C.) 1942, Vol. III, p. 2335.



Test fire started .....	3:00 p.m.
Smoke reported by Lookout .....	3:03 p.m.
Crew started for fire .....	3:05 p.m.
Arrived at fire (11 miles by road) .....	3:22 p.m.
Fire extinguished .....	3:27 p.m.
Crew arrived back at camp .....	3:54 p.m.

This 'preparedness feature' constitutes the principal value of these camps and it cannot be compensated for under any other manpower plan, even were men available under any other plan . . . They (i.e. A.S. men) have served a function of great national importance and will continue to do so in these camps. The need is as urgent as ever and they cannot be replaced.<sup>2</sup>

In view of the excellent services rendered by these men in the B.C. Forestry Service at the negligible cost of fifty cents wages per day it is not surprising that there was strong resentment on the part of Provincial Government officials as well as on the part of leading newspapers when the Ottawa Government announced that the agreement with British Columbia would be terminated on March 31st, 1944. Under the caption "Loss of Conchies Robs B.C. of Best Fire-Fighting Crews" the *Times* inadvertently paid high tribute to the services of conscientious objectors in preserving the valuable forests of British Columbia. In this article it is pointed out that

withdrawal of conscientious objectors from B.C.'s forestry camps on Selective Service orders returning them to their farms, will cost the provincial forestry branch the most effective fire fighting service it has ever had.<sup>3</sup>

The article quotes department officials as saying: "We don't know how we'll replace them . . . We've always depended on casual labor in other years. Now, when you want men, you can't get them."<sup>4</sup>

This report on the services of some five hundred conscientious objectors on Vancouver Island makes special reference to the fact that these crews were highly organized for fire-fighting. The chief advantage of such trained crews lay in the speed with which they could reply to calls when a blaze broke out. The average time required to set them on the road, with all equipment and food packed, as indicated above, was three minutes. The writer of the article just mentioned compares this record with that of untrained crews by stating that this "is in strong contrast to the three to six hours lost in recruiting casual labor, and has made the organized crews, immediately at hand, three times as effective."<sup>5</sup>

Fire-fighting by the men in the A.S.W. camps in the National Parks was also given high priority rating. Much valuable timber was saved by

<sup>2</sup> Letter: Gray to Manson, Feb. 11, 1943, File No. 601.3 (12) S.S.D.

<sup>3</sup> *Times* (Victoria), March 18, 1944, p. 2.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*

this effective method of fire-prevention and suppression, and in addition, the scenic beauty of parks and forests was preserved.

As indicated in Chapter V, the work of Alternative Service men in camps was not confined to fire-fighting. On the West Coast, and chiefly on Vancouver Island, a vast reforestation program was undertaken. Literally millions of cedar, fir and hemlock were planted. These beautiful evergreen forests pay eloquent and lasting tribute to the faithful services rendered by conscientious objectors to their country during World War II.<sup>6</sup>

One phase of work which deserves special mention is the control of insect depredations by Alternative Service men. A report in the technical journal of the Canadian Society of Forest Engineers for June, 1945, describes the outbreak and control of the mountainpine beetle in the stands of lodge pole pine of Banff National Park. All the personnel of the control crews except the foremen were Alternative Service workers. The men are described as reliable workers, rapidly acquiring efficiency in control procedure. The report concludes with the observation that control work at Banff has been successful and that the Banff National Park has been saved from a major catastrophe.<sup>7</sup>

Men in A.S.W. camps made other important contributions to the Canadian economy during the War. The production of pit props by Alternative Service workers, for instance, was an important factor in keeping western coal mines in operation during the War. The building of strategic roads on Vancouver Island was considered to be of vital importance by Government officials. The examples cited will suffice to show that Alternative Service men in camps were doing work which may quite appropriately be described as work of "national importance."

## II. CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE CANADIAN RED CROSS SOCIETY

As noted previously, Order-in-Council P.C. 2821, which became effective May 1st, 1943, broke new ground in the handling of conscientious objectors by providing that such persons be made available for work in agriculture and industry under conditions providing for uniform treatment of such persons and at the same time not inducing applications for postponement on the grounds of conscientious objection. In order to implement the last clause in that objective, it was necessary to find some means of diverting a portion of the earnings of Alternative Service workers from their own use since it was obvious that agricultural and industrial employers must be required to pay the going wage-rates of the jobs on which conscientious objectors were to be placed. Apparently there were legal obstacles in the way of having this diversion of earnings

<sup>6</sup> The writer, who had witnessed the planting of these trees in 1943, could hardly believe his eyes when he re-visited this area north of Campbell River in 1953. The burnt-over areas dotted with ugly stumps and snags had in ten years been transformed into beautiful evergreen forests.

<sup>7</sup> cf. *Forestry Chronicle*, June, 1945.

accrue to the Crown and hence it was decided to make the Canadian Red Cross Society the recipient of these wage-deductions and payments.<sup>8</sup>

The collection record of these Red Cross receivables was remarkably good according to A.S. Officers. Very little collection pressure was required. Adjustments were sometimes necessary where it developed that agreements had been made which called for monthly payments in an amount that was proving a hardship for the dependents of the conscientious objector concerned. The readiness of A.S. Officers to make adjustments where necessary, undoubtedly was one of the factors which accounts for the remarkable success of this entire program.

Table XV shows the amounts paid to the chartered banks of Canada for the credit of the Canadian Red Cross Society from the inauguration of the new program in May, 1943, to December 31, 1945. The breakdown is in accordance with the location of the District Treasury Officer who acted as the "biller" in the plan.

Table XVI shows the contributions of Alternative Service workers in agriculture and industry according to provinces.

For the Red Cross Society these contributions were a welcome gift in a time of great need that taxed the resources of the Society to the limit. That Red Cross officials appreciated these payments is seen from a letter addressed to Mr. MacNamara by the Assistant National Commissioner of the Canadian Red Cross, Major-General B. W. Browne. He writes: "The Red Cross is most appreciative of this income and realizes what a wonderful thing it is for the Society."<sup>9</sup>

TABLE XV  
Payments by Conscientious Objectors to  
The Canadian Red Cross

Treasury Office at	Amount Paid May 1 to Dec. 31 1943	Amount Paid 1944	Amount Paid 1945	Total Paid to Dec. 31, 1945
Moncton, N.B. ....	\$ 247.75	\$ 1,424.05	\$ 1,010.88	\$ 2,682.68
Montreal, P.Q. ....	210.00	1,336.98	1,276.99	2,823.97
Toronto, Ont. ....	40,424.03	141,845.22	86,095.79	268,355.04
North Bay, Ont. ....	2,000.90	5,308.15	4,096.76	11,405.81
London, Ont. ....	69,455.43	223,952.10	139,942.19	433,349.72
Winnipeg, Man. ....	45,199.17	330,785.14	279,438.53	655,422.84
Regina, Sask.				
Saskatoon, Sask. ....	14,076.61	156,689.72	154,785.45	325,551.78
Edmonton, Alta. ....	12,453.95	114,101.80	94,136.39	220,691.14
Vancouver, B.C. ....	38,158.40	162,746.13	88,710.92	286,633.45
Nelson, B.C. ....	— — —	416.20	15,470.07	15,886.27
Total .....	\$219,316.24	\$1,138,532.49	\$864,953.97	\$2,222,802.70

<sup>8</sup> This is the view expressed by J. F. MacKinnon in his *Historical Account, op. cit.*

<sup>9</sup> Letter: Browne to MacNamara, Jan. 13, 1944. File 601.3 (12). S.S.D.

TABLE XVI  
Provincial Source of Red Cross Payments

Ontario .....	\$713,110.57
Manitoba .....	655,422.84
Saskatchewan .....	325,551.78
British Columbia .....	302,519.72
Alberta .....	220,691.14
Quebec .....	2,823.97
Maritimes .....	2,682.68
Total .....	\$2,222,802.70 <sup>10</sup>

### III. EVALUATION OF ALTERNATIVE SERVICE WORK BY GOVERNMENT LEADERS

An examination of the relevant correspondence between Government officials, as well as a study of reports in the Canadian Press during the War, shows very clearly that Government leaders thought highly of the services of conscientious objectors. A brief study of these "citations of merit" will reveal the reasons why the men performing Alternative Service were appreciated.

That postponed conscientious objectors were highly desirable as workers in agriculture and industry is expressed in a letter by A. Wells Gray, Minister of Lands (B.C.) to Major-General L. R. La Fleche, Minister of National War Services on January 29, 1943. Mr. Gray complains about various "pressure groups" who would like to see the men then employed in camps of the B.C. Forestry Service transferred to other types of work. The following quotation from Mr. Gray's letter is interesting and illuminating:

It is a notable fact, that no sooner were a few of these alternative service workers in camps in the Province, then a wide variety of interests were inquiring as to the possibility of securing their services. We have been approached by various mills, logging operators, the E. and N. Railway, by C. A. Cotterell, General Superintendent of the Canadian Pacific Railway in Vancouver, by the Lumber and Shingle Manufacturers' Association, the British Columbia Loggers' Association, and even by taxi firms. The services of these men were urgently requested for harvesting crops in the Fraser Valley and for harvesting the fruit crop in the Okanagan. It was proposed that they should be returned to the Prairies for the harvest there, and most of them being farmers, we had urgent requests for harvest leaves. These representations have been progressively urgent and pressing as the employment situation has become more aggravated during recent months.<sup>11</sup>

<sup>10</sup> From the records of Red Cross Payments, Files No.60:30-40. S.S.D.

<sup>11</sup> Letter, A. Wells Gray, to La Fleche, January 29, 1943. File 601. 3: (12). S.S.D.

Since Mr. Gray in this letter is pleading for a renewal of the agreement which the Federal Government had made with his Province the year before, he closes his appeal to the Minister of National War Services with these words: "All of these requests, of course, have much merit, but I am still very strongly of the opinion that the public interest is being best served in their present assignment . . ." <sup>12</sup>

Several aspects may be given which account for the demand and appreciation of the services of postponed conscientious objectors.

(1) *Readiness to do hard work.* In an article in the *Times* (Victoria) on August 29th, 1941, under the caption 'Conscientious Objectors praised by Authorities' the following quotation is attributed to *Justice T. C. Davis*, Associate Deputy Minister of National War Services: "Once we get them into the camps they are swell. They work like Trojans. They are doing a great job." <sup>13</sup>

The Minister of Mines and Resources, the *Honorable T. A. Crerar*, had this to say about the work of Alternative Service men in National Parks: "It has been found that excellent service has been rendered by these conscientious objectors. They are, in the main, Mennonites, farmers' sons, well used to hard work." <sup>14</sup>

Immediately after the War, the Minister of Labour, the *Honorable Humphrey Mitchell*, paid the following tribute to the men who had performed Alternative Service:

Conscientious objectors have willingly undertaken heavy and difficult work during the war. Their services have been available at several periods when critical situations developed due to labor shortages. As an example of this, some 75 conscientious objectors were employed at the Head of the Lakes in loading and unloading grain cars at a time when a serious congestion was developing . . . Labour Department officials relate stories of conscientious objectors coming to district offices to obtain heavier and more difficult work in order to do more for the war effort. <sup>15</sup>

(2) *Sincerity and faithfulness.* The majority of officials who had direct contact with Alternative Service men during the War appreciated their dependability and integrity of character. They were convinced that most "conchies" were sincere in their convictions about war and military service and that their application for a C.O. status was not an attempt to shirk their responsibility or to escape from danger. The *Honorable Humphrey Mitchell* made this statement concerning them: "The average conscientious objector in Canada is entirely sincere in his desire to do everything short of actual combat duties to be of service to his country in time of war." <sup>16</sup>

In his annual report for 1944, *C. D. Orchard*, Chief Forester for British Columbia, makes special reference to the fact that conscientious

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>13</sup> *Times*, (Victoria) August 29, 1941, p. 2.

<sup>14</sup> Letter: Crerar to Gray, February 3, 1942. (See Appendix D.)

<sup>15</sup> Press Release by Department of Labour, June 1, 1945, *Op. Cit.*

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*

objectors in the Forestry Service had proven to be faithful workers in spite of the fact that they received only a small wage, and that no incentives of any kind were provided for special effort. In Mr. Orchard's words:

Alternative Service workers were not required to work with the idea of making good on the job and continuing in the work to rise to position of greater responsibility. Neither was their 50-cents per-day wage much encouragement in doing a job well. The work performed under the circumstances was surprisingly satisfactory.<sup>17</sup>

(3) *Courage and unselfishness.* Unfortunately no records are available on the service of conscientious objectors as non-combatants in the R.C.A.M.C. Since the C.O.'s were incorporated into the regular units of the Army, no separate records of their achievements have been kept. References are found, however, in the Canadian Press to those conscientious objectors who volunteered to serve in the Friends Ambulance Unit in China. *John Clare*, *Toronto Daily Star* staff correspondent in Chungking, reported on November 10, 1945, about these "China Heroes". This is how Mr. Clare describes their service:

Fifty conscientious objectors who because of their religious beliefs were relieved of responsibility of bearing arms by the Canadian tribunal, have found another kind of fight in China. A score of Canadians with the Friends Ambulance Unit have been helping to carry drugs to front line hospitals, care for the wounded and bring them back to base hospitals... Despite its non-combatant role the Ambulance Unit has received a citation from a U.S. officer... According to this officer, men of the unit have shown courage and unselfishness at forward medical installations, performing operations and rendering aid to the wounded.<sup>18</sup>

Among those named in the article are a number of United Church members from Toronto and other Ontario points, as well as two ordained ministers of the United Church.<sup>19</sup>

(4) *Willingness to cooperate.* In his short history of the wartime activities of the Alternative Service Branch of the Department of Labour, *J. F. MacKinnon*, Chief Alternative Service Officer, pays special tribute to the cooperativeness of Mennonites:

The Mennonites cooperated in every way from the beginning of Alternative Service. There was very close cooperation between the Mennonite bishops and the Alternative Service Officials. Perhaps it can be said that this group contributed more than any other group to Alternative Service... the bishops were always most willing to discuss mutual problems and to go as far as possible to cooperate within the limits of their conscience.<sup>20</sup>

<sup>17</sup> Annual Report of the Forest Branch, Department of Lands, B.C. 1944.

<sup>18</sup> *Toronto Daily Star*, November 10, 1945.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>20</sup> *Historical Account*, *Op. Cit.* p. 26.

And thus this story of trials and triumphs is brought to a close. In the writer's view, Alternative Service during World War II constitutes an important phase of recent Canadian history. It is hoped that this "experiment in tolerance" will also be cherished in future years by Canadians of all racial, religious and political groups as part of their "national heritage."

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## APPENDIX A

### P.C. 957

Certified to be a true copy of a Minute of a Meeting of the Committee of the Privy Council, approved by His Excellency the Governor General on the 13th August, 1873.

The Committee of Council have had under consideration the annexed Memorandum, dated 28th July, 1873, from the Honourable the Minister of Agriculture stating that he has made an arrangement with certain Delegates from the Mennonites settled in South Russia in view of their formal announcement to him of their intention to settle, together with the Mennonite Colonists whom they represent, in the Province of Manitoba, and submitting for Your Excellency's approval the terms of the said arrangement as set forth in the said annexed Memorandum.

The Committee advise that the arrangement so made be sanctioned.

(sgd) "A. M. Hill"

Asst. Clerk of the Privy Council.

### P.C. 957 (a)

The undersigned has the honour to report that he has made an arrangement with the following named delegates from the Mennonites settled in South Russia, in view of their announcement to him in their joint letter of the 23rd July instant of their intention to settle, together with the Mennonite Colonists whom they represent, in the Province of Manitoba: — David Klassen, delegate of Henboden Colony: — Jacob Peters, delegate of Bergthar Colony: — Heinrich Wiebe, delegate of Bergthar Colony: — Cornelius Tows, delegate of Grienfield Colony: —

The arrangement made is to the following effect: —

1st. That an entire exemption from any Military service, as is provided by law and Order in Council, will be granted to the denomination of Christians called Menonites.

2nd. That eight townships will be reserved, under the Order in Council passed on the 3rd March last, in the Province of Manitoba for free grants on the condition of settlement, as is provided in the Dominion Lands Act, that is to say, — “Any person who is the head of a “family, or has attained the age of 21 years, shall be entitled to be entered for one quarter section or a less quantity of unappropriated Dominion Lands, for the purpose of securing a homestead right in respect thereof.”

3rd. The said reserve of eight townships to be for the exclusive use of the Menonite settlers, and the free grants of one quarter section to consist of 160 acres as provided by the Act.

4th. That should the Menonite settlement extend beyond the eight townships set aside by the Order in Council of 3rd March last, other townships will be reserved to meet the full requirements of Menonite Immigration.

5th. If next Spring the Menonite Settlers, on viewing the eight townships set aside for their use, should prefer to exchange them for any other eight unoccupied townships, such exchange will be allowed.

6th. That, in addition to the free grant of one quarter section to every person over 21 years of age, on condition of settlement, the right to purchase the remaining three quarters of the section at one dollar per acre is granted, as provided by law, so as to complete the whole section.

7th. That the Menonite settler will receive a patent for a free grant after three years residence, in accordance with the terms of the Dominion Lands Act.

8th. That, in the event of the death of the settler, the lawful heirs can claim the patent for the free grant, upon proof that settlement duties for three years have been performed.

9th. That from the moment of occupation the settlers acquire a “homestead right” in the land.

10th. That the Menonites will have the fullest privilege of exercising their religious principles, and educating their children in schools, as provided by law, without any kind of molestation or restriction whatever.

11th. That they will have the privilege of affirming, instead of making affidavit, as is provided by law.

12th. That the Government of Canada will undertake to furnish Passenger Warrants from Hamburg to Fort Garry for Menonite families of good character for the sum of \$30.00 for every person over the age of eight years, half price or \$15.00 for persons under the age of eight years, and for infants under one year \$3.00.

13th. That the arrangement as to price shall not be changed during the Seasons of 1874, 1875 and 1876.

14th. That, if such arrangement is changed after the year 1876, the price shall not, subject to the approval of Parliament, for a period to extend to the year 1882, exceed \$40.00 per adult, and for children in proportion.

15th. That the Immigrants shall be provided with provisions during the portion of the journey between Liverpool and Collingwood; but that during other portions of the journey they are to find their own provisions.

He respectfully recommends that the arrangements as hereinbefore recited with the Menonite delegates be concurred in.

The whole respectfully submitted.

Department of Agriculture,  
Ottawa, 28th July, 1873.

(sgd) J. H. Pope,  
Minister of Agriculture.

## APPENDIX B

### National War Services Regulations, 1940 (Recruits) (Consolidation 1941)

Approved by Order-in-Council P.C. 1822 of March 18th, 1941,  
As amended to Date, April 22, 1942

### **Mennonites and Doukhobors**

#### 18.

(1) Members of the denomination of Christians called Mennonites and members of the Community of Doukhobors, who immigrated to Canada pursuant to the arrangements evidenced by the Order-in-Council of August 13, 1873, and by the Order-in-Council of December 6, 1898, respectively, or the descendants of such immigrants who have continued without interruption to be members of the aforesaid sect or denomination of Christians or of the aforesaid Community of Doukhobors and who have resided without interruption in Canada, shall be entitled subject as provided in these regulations, to the postponement of their military training.

(2) Men whose registration cards disclose that they represent themselves to be members of a sect or denomination of Christians called Mennonites or of the Community called Doukhobors, shall not be required by the Divisional Registrar, except as hereinafter in these regulations provided, to report for military training: Provided, however, that every such man shall, as may be directed by the Board, report for medical examination along with other men of his age class and, if found medically fit for training, shall be required to report for military training unless, by application in writing to the Divisional Registrar of the Administrative Division in which he resides, within eight clear days of the date appearing on the "Notice — Medical Examination", or any notice issued in lieu thereof, which has been sent to him by the Divisional Registrar, he claims to be entitled, as a Mennonite or as a Doukhobor, as the case may be, to postponement, of his military training. Any application for postponement made before the coming into force of this subsection shall be deemed to be an application for postponement under this section.

(3) The Board of the Administrative Division in which an applicant

for postponement under this section resides may order the postponement of military training in the case of such person, or the said Board may order that such person shall appear, at his own expense, before the Board or any member thereof, a Judge of a Superior or other Court, a Police or Stipendiary Magistrate, or any Magistrate having the authority of two justices of the Peace authorized by the Board to act in its place, at such time and place as the Board may designate, to establish his claim that he is entitled to the postponement of his military training under this section and the Board, member of the Board, Judge, or Magistrate, as the case may be, shall determine whether the claimant is so entitled, and such determination shall be final and conclusive.

(4) Immediately after the adjudication authorized by the next preceding subsection, the Board shall direct the Divisional Registrar to call out or to postpone the military training of the claimant.

### **Conscientious Objectors**

#### **19.**

(1) Any man who claims that he conscientiously objects to bearing arms or to undertaking combatant service may, at his own expense, apply for an order of direction of the Board postponing his military training which order or direction may be given by the Board to the Divisional Registrar if the Board is satisfied that such man conscientiously objects to bearing arms or to undertaking combatant service.

(2) Any application for such order or direction shall be made in writing to the Divisional Registrar of the Administrative Division in which the applicant resides, within eight clear days of the date appearing on the "Notice-Medical Examination", or any notice issued in lieu thereof, which has been sent to him by the Divisional Registrar: Provided, however, that any application for postponement made before the coming into force of this subsection shall be deemed to be an application for postponement under this section.

(3) The Divisional Registrar shall not, while any such application is pending, send the applicant a "Notice-Military Training".

(4) The application shall be heard by the Board or any member thereof, or by a Judge of a Superior or other Court, a Police or Stipendiary Magistrate or any Magistrate having the authority of two Justices of the Peace authorized by the said Board to entertain such application, and the Board, member of the Board, Judge or Magistrate, as the case may be, shall determine whether the claimant is entitled to the postponement of his military training under this section and such determination shall be final and conclusive.

(5) The Divisional Registrar shall make all the necessary arrangements for the hearing of such applications as expeditiously as possible, and shall notify the applicants of the time and place of hearing. Applicants shall attend hearings at their own expense.

(6) The Divisional Registrar shall be governed by any competently given order or direction of the Board relative to the calling out or postponement of the calling out of the applicant.

## APPENDIX C

## APPLICATION

**For an Order Deferring or Postponing Military Training**

To the Divisional Registrar of the Administrative Division .....

Headquarters .....

Pursuant to the provision made for conscientious objectors to military training and service,

....., .....  
Name Age Date of Birth....., in the Province of .....  
Post Officeand being registered in Electoral District No. [ ] .....  
Name

do hereby apply for an Order deferring or postponing military training as

(a member

(and adherent of the ..... Church  
Name of Denominationwhose tenets and articles of faith are opposed to the bearing of arms  
and to the performance of military service in any form, to which faith  
and doctrine I personally agree.

Date .....

Signed .....  
Name in Full

Call No. ....

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**CERTIFICATE OF MEMBERSHIP**

This is to certify that .....

(a member

is (an adherent of the .....  
Name of Denominationat ..... in the Province of .....  
Address of CongregationDate .....  
Signature of Pastor or Clerk

## APPENDIX D

**Minister of Mines and Resources***Air Mail*

Ottawa, February 3, 1943.

Dear Mr. Gray,

The Minister of National Defence has referred to me your request for assistance in the protection of British Columbia forests from fires started by enemy action or sabotage. The Honourable Mr. Ralston has advised you that it would not be practicable to organize protection along military lines.

Our understanding here is that there would be serious difficulty in securing, in British Columbia, suitable civilian labour for an operation of this magnitude, without disturbing the employment situation in the logging camps and elsewhere. Furthermore, it would be hard to employ workers useful for a project of this kind, who would be eligible for employment under the terms of the Order-in-Council debarring use of men of military age who are physically fit for military service.

I am inclined to agree with you that the situation is potentially really serious and that protective measures should be organized. I would call your attention to the fact that this Department, under an arrangement with the Department of National War Services, is using Alternative Service Workers in the National Parks. It has been found that excellent service has been rendered by these conscientious objectors. They are, in the main, Mennonites, farmers' sons, well used to hard work, and of course, only the physically fit are drafted into the camps. The men are assigned to camps in the National Parks by the Divisional Registrars. The responsibility for the organization and supervision of the camps, and for the work performed, is placed with the Parks officials, funds being secured from a special war vote. I am enclosing a copy of the Manual used for the guidance of those conducting Alternative Service Work camps in the National Parks, which will enable you to obtain an idea of the general method of organization and procedure.

I have been in communication with the Minister of National War Services and he is agreeable to a proposal that alternative service workers, to the extent that they are available, be used on this forest protection undertaking in your province, provided the camps can be run for a reasonable figure. The per diem cost in the National Parks camps is less than \$3.00 per man-day, and it would seem that this figure should not be exceeded in British Columbia. This is, of course, based on a wage allowance of fifty cents per day.

If the camps were established in your province, they would, of course, have to be on the basis of continuous operation, but I understand that work in forest improvements could be found for the men throughout the year. We would expect that, to the utmost extent possible, your Department would provide the necessary tools, equipment, and transport for the operation of these camps. I am advised that the Dominion



Forester has spoken over the telephone with your Chief Forester, who indicated that considerable quantities of equipment and motor transport could be made available if a project of this nature were agreed upon.

If the British Columbia project were proceeded with, the funds would have to be provided from the war vote, and, as indicated above, we would expect the estimated costs not to exceed \$3.00 per man-day, aside from whatever capital expenditure for equipment must be made to supplement supplies made available by the province. No commitment can be given at this date of the number of men to be employed, but the indications are that an adequate supply will be available by next summer.

Your department would be charged with the supervision of the camps and allocation of work, but there would, of course, have to be Dominion approval of details of organization and inspection of operations. This we would handle through the Lands, Parks and Forests Branch of this department, which has been handling the Alternative Service Work Camps in National Parks and at Forest Experiment Stations.

If the foregoing arrangement appeals to you, I would be glad to hear from you as promptly as possible, for plans for the use of these young men on government works are now under discussion here.

Yours very truly,

"T. A. CRERAR"

The Honourable A. Wells Gray,  
Minister of Lands,  
Victoria, B.C.

## APPENDIX E

### Part II A: — Conscientious Objectors (P.C. 2821) April 7, 1943.

250. In this part unless the context otherwise requires,

- (a) "alternative service" means any work or project prescribed by the Minister to be performed in lieu of military training by men to whom postponement orders have been granted under The National Selective Service Mobilization Regulations or The National War Services Regulations 1940 (Recruits) on the ground that they are Mennonites, Doukhobors or conscientious objectors;
- (b) "Alternative Service Officer" means a Selective Service Officer designated by the Minister to act as the Alternative Service Officer for any area for the purpose of this part; and in respect of any person means the Alternative Service Officer for the area in which such person carries on business or is employed, or if he is not in business or employer, for the area in which he resides; and

- (c) "person to whom this part applies" means a person to whom a postponement order has been granted under section thirteen of the National Selective Service Mobilization Regulations or The National War Services Regulations 1940 (Recruits) on the ground that he is a Doukhobor, Mennonite or conscientious objector.

251. (1) The Alternative Service Officer may from time to time serve a person to whom this part applies or cause him to be served, either personally or by registered mail, with an order to report at the time and place and to the person therein specified to carry out alternative service.

(2) Every person upon whom an order is served under this section shall comply with the order and shall live in such place or places under such circumstances and perform such alternative service as may from time to time be prescribed by the Minister.

(3) The Minister shall pay not less than fifty cents per day to every person performing alternative service under this section and may pay not more than seventy-five cents per day to any such person who has been appointed a sub-foreman and not more than one dollar per day to any such person who has been appointed a foreman; but no such man shall be provided with clothing at public expense.

(4) The Minister may make arrangements with any department of the Government of Canada or enter into an agreement with the government of any province for the organization and operation of a place or places where persons may be required to report and perform alternative service under this section; and any such agreement may provide for

- (a) the payment of, or reimbursement for, all or any part of the cost of operating such place or places including any necessary capital outlay, rental of premises or equipment, cost of food and other supplies, the remuneration provided for by subsection three of this section, cost of tobacco, clothing and other goods to stock canteens, and salaries for necessary officers and employees;
- (b) the employment of necessary officers and employees;
- (c) the nature of the alternative service to be carried out and the conditions under which it is to be carried out;
- (d) the living conditions to prevail in such place or places; and
- (e) medical attention to be provided for persons required to attend such place or places;

and notwithstanding the provisions of the Civil Service Act, such agreement may provide that the necessary officers and employees for such place or places may be employed by some person specified therein on such terms as may be therein provided. \*

\* Order-in-Council P.C. 2/3514, April 19, 1943, authorizes a draft agreement to be entered into between the Minister of Labour of Canada and the Minister of Lands of British Columbia. Under it alternative service workers not exceeding 600 in number may be required to perform work for the protection and conservation of the forest resources of British Columbia, since that province itself is unable to provide the increased protection necessary to cope with the wartime situation. The work is directed

(5) Any person who is placed in charge of a place pursuant to an arrangement or agreement under this section may give to persons required to report to such place pursuant to this section, and delegate to others authority to give to such persons, all orders reasonably necessary for discipline in such place or for the proper performance of the alternative service which they are required to carry out.

- (6) The Minister may prescribe rules for the regulation
- (a) of any place to which persons are required to report under this section and of the conduct of persons required to report to a place pursuant to this section; and
  - (b) of the performance of alternative service.

(7) The Alternative Service Officer may, for any reason which he deems proper, from time to time, grant to a person who is required to perform alternative service, leave of absence without remuneration for such period as the Alternative Service Officer may determine; and a person who fails to report to such place as the Alternative Service Officer may specify at the expiration of such period or on cancellation of the leave before the expiration thereof is guilty of an offence and liable on summary conviction to imprisonment for a term of twelve months, with or without hard labour, or to a fine of not less than fifty dollars and not exceeding two hundred dollars, or to both such imprisonment and such fine.

- (8) A man required to report pursuant to this section
- (a) who fails to report as required by an order sent to him by the Alternative Service Officer;
  - (b) who leaves, without lawful authority, a place where he is required to be under this section;
  - (c) who fails to obey an order lawfully given pursuant to subsection five of this section;
  - (d) who fails to comply with any rule made pursuant to subsection six of this section; or
  - (e) who, upon being transferred from one place to another, fails to obey an order given by a person lawfully in charge of him;
- is guilty of an offence and liable upon summary conviction to imprisonment for a term not exceeding twelve months with or without hard labour, or to a fine of not less than fifty dollars and not exceeding two hundred dollars, or to both such imprisonment and such fine.

(9) Where a man is convicted of an offence under subsection seven or eight of this section for failing to report as required, the Justice or Justices of the Peace, Magistrate, Judge or Court before whom he is so convicted shall, if counsel or other person acting for the Crown so re-

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by the provincial Minister under the supervision of the Lands, Parks and Forests Branch of the Dominion Department of Mines and Resources. Assignment of workers is arranged jointly by the Lands, Parks and Forests Branch and the National Selective Service administration. This agreement is for the fiscal year 1943-44 and replaces an agreement which was in effect during the preceding fiscal year.

quests, in addition to imposing the punishment therein provided for, direct that such man shall be taken either forthwith or upon the expiration of his term of imprisonment, if any, in police custody to a place specified by the Counsel or other person acting for the Crown and delivered to the person in charge thereof.

(10) A man required to report pursuant to this section shall, during the time he is performing alternative service, be entitled to receive benefits under the Government Employees Compensation Act, as though he were an "employee" as defined by that Act and the Minister, with the concurrence of the Minister of Transport, may prescribe the remuneration a man shall be deemed to have received for the purpose of such Act.\*

(11) Subject to subsection ten of this section, the Crown shall not be liable in respect of any claim arising out of the disability, illness or death of any person ordered to report under this section.

(12) All rules, directions, notices and orders prescribed, given, served or made under The National Selective Service Mobilization Regulations 1940 (Recruits) shall as far as applicable be deemed to have been given, served or made *mutatis mutandis* under this section.

252. (1) The Alternative Service Officer may from time to time serve a person to whom this part applies or cause him to be served, either personally or by registered mail, with an order requiring him to apply forthwith for such employment in agriculture, industry or elsewhere as may be specified in the order or by a Selective Service Officer named in the order and to accept the employment if it is offered to him upon such terms, not inconsistent with paragraphs (a) to (e) inclusive of subsection five of this section, as are specified in the order or by the Selective Service Officer named in the order.

(2) The Alternative Service Officer may at any time by an order served upon the employer and employee terminate employment which has been entered into pursuant to an order made under this section.

(3) No person shall terminate employment which has been accepted pursuant to this section without the consent in writing of the Alternative Service Officer.

(4) Every person who accepts employment pursuant to an order made under this section shall perform his duties under his contract of employment to the best of his ability.

(5) The employment of any person under this section shall be subject to the terms set out in the order pursuant to which the employment was accepted and to the following provisions:

- (a) if the employment is in agriculture, the employer shall supply board and lodging for the employee and in addition thereto shall pay in respect of the employment such wages as may be prescribed by the Minister;
- (b) if the employment is outside agriculture, the employer shall pay in respect thereof wages at the rate, if any, fixed by collective

\* The remuneration is prescribed by an Order-in-Council of June 1, 1943 (p. 43).

- agreement for the place where the work is to be performed, or, if there is no such agreement, at the rate paid by good employers;
- (c) if the employment is in agriculture, the employer shall pay to the employee, out of wages payable to him under this subsection, twenty-five dollars per month, unless the wages are less than twenty-five dollars per month, in which event he shall pay him the full amount thereof;
  - (d) if the employment is outside agriculture, the employer shall supply board and lodging to the employee or pay him an allowance fixed by the Minister in lieu thereof and shall in addition pay him
    - (i) the amount by which the wages payable in respect of the employee exceed the aggregate of the allowance for board and lodging as fixed by the Minister and amounts which he is required by law to pay out of the wages to other persons, if such amount is not in excess of twenty-five dollars; or
    - (ii) twenty-five dollars per month if the amount, by which the wages payable in respect of the employee exceed the aggregate of the allowance for board and lodging as fixed by the Minister and amounts which he is required by law to pay out of the wages to other persons, is in excess of twenty-five dollars, and
  - (e) the employer shall, each month, pay to the Canadian Red Cross Society, or to some person designated by the Minister to receive it on behalf of the Canadian Red Cross, the amount by which the wages payable in respect, of the employee for that month exceed the aggregate of
    - (i) the amount payable to the employee under this subsection;
    - (ii) amounts, if any, which he is required by law to pay to other persons and
    - (iii) if the employment is outside agriculture, the allowance for board and lodging prescribed by the Minister.
- (6) The Canadian Red Cross Society may recover as a debt by action in any court of competent jurisdiction any amount payable to it under subsection five of this section or the Attorney-General of Canada may recover any such amount on behalf of the Canadian Red Cross Society, in any court of competent jurisdiction, as a debt due to the Crown.
- (7) The Minister may, after consultation with the Minister of Agriculture for a province fix a wage rate which shall be paid in the province or any part thereof in respect of agricultural employment under this section.
- (8) Every person who contravenes any of the provisions of this section is guilty of an offence and liable on summary conviction to a fine of not less than fifty dollars and not more than two hundred dollars or to imprisonment for a term not exceeding twelve months or to both such fine and such imprisonment.

253. (1) When an Alternative Service Officer orders a person to report for alternative service or to take employment under this part, he may pay such person an amount not exceeding his necessary travelling expenses from the place where such person is when the order is served on him to the place at which he is ordered to report or to the place of employment, and the Alternative Service Officer may pay such amount or any part thereof to a transportation company on behalf of such person in payment of his transportation.

(2) Where an Alternative Service Officer has ordered a person to report for alternative service or to take employment under this part and, in his opinion, it is necessary for the efficient operation of this part, he may pay such person an amount not exceeding his necessary travelling expenses from the place at which he was ordered to report or his place of employment to any other place or to such latter place and back and the Alternative Service Officer may pay such amount or any part thereof to a transportation company on behalf of such person in payment of his transportation.

254. (1) The Alternative Service Officer may, pursuant to section two hundred and fifty-one, order a person to whom this part applies to report for alternative service notwithstanding that such person is in employment which he has accepted pursuant to an order made under this part.

(2) The Alternative Service Officer may, pursuant to section two hundred and fifty-two, order a person to whom this part applies to apply for and accept employment notwithstanding that such person is in other employment which he has accepted pursuant to an order made under this part or is performing alternative service.





